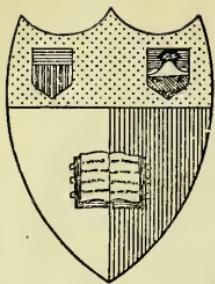




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# OBSERVATIONS ON SEVERAL PARTS OF THE COUNTIES OF *CAMBRIDGE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, AND ESSEX.*

ALSO ON SEVERAL PARTS OF  
*NORTH WALES;*

RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO  
PICTURESQUE BEAUTY,

IN  
TWO TOURS,  
THE FORMER MADE IN THE YEAR 1769.  
THE LATTER IN THE YEAR 1773.

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BY WILLIAM GILPIN, A. M.  
PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY; AND VICAR OF BOLDRE IN  
NEW-FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

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PUBLISHED BY HIS TRUSTEES  
*FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS SCHOOL AT BOLDRE.*

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OBSERVATIONS,  
ON SEVERAL PARTS OF THE COUNTIES OF  
*CAMBRIDGE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK,*  
*AND ESSEX;*  
RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO  
PICTURESQUE BEAUTY;  
MADE IN THE YEAR 1769.  
TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
A CRITICISM ON *LORD ORFORD'S PICTURES*  
AT HOUGHTON-HALL.



# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## CAMBRIDGE, NORFOLK, &c.

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### SECTION I.

THE following remarks were the result of a hasty tour through Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. The principal view indeed of this journey, was to examine Lord Orford's pictures at Houghton-hall; which I mention as an apology for dwelling so long on so disproportioned a part.

The Essex road, as we leave London, makes a short turn from Clapton to Lea-bridge; beyond which it crosses the meadows in a direct line, and cuts at right angles a woody horizon, consisting of a distant view of Epping-forest. The meadows are flat, and the Lea, of

course, is sluggish. Little beauty can result either from one, or the other.

From hence the road leads into close lanes ; and the country continuing flat, seldom opens into a distance. Wherever an opening presents itself, it is crowded with buildings, which are the fatiguing objects in every part of the environs of London. So great a number of them, instead of adorning landscape, distract the eye, and destroy all idea of unity. One object, or two, in a view, is sufficient ; but not such as we meet with here.

Epping-forest is in many parts little better than a barren heath. About Snaresbrook we found it wild, woody, and picturesque.

Lord Tilney's at Wansted, built by Colin Campbell, perhaps of all the great houses in England, answers best the united purposes of grandeur, and convenience. The plan is simple, but magnificent. The front extends two hundred, and sixty feet. A hall, and a saloon occupy the body of the house, forming the center of each front. From these run a double

row of chambers. Nothing can exceed their convenience. They communicate in one grand suit; and yet each, by the addition of a back stair, becomes a separate apartment. — It is difficult to say, whether we are better pleased with the grandeur and elegance without; or with the simplicity, and contrivance within.

The chambers are furnished to profusion with velvets, embroidery, and tapestry: but there are no pictures worth looking at; and yet there is the affectation of a large collection. Some indifferent hand has produced a great variety of copies from Rembrant, Guido, and other masters; but they are of little value. Here also are several of Panini's crowded ruins; and in the hall, and eating-parlour, many histories by Caffali. Coriolanus is a tolerable picture: but, in general, they consist of bad figures, injudicious grouping, and gawdy colouring. In the ball-room is a good Portia by Skalken.

It is not easy to avoid such an opportunity of remarking the absurdity of adorning a noble house with tawdry pictures. The genuine works of capital masters, however indifferent, have a kind of classical authority stamped upon them; and if they displease one connoisseur, may

please another. Parts in all of them we may admire ; and if there is nothing else to please, we may be amused with examining the mode of execution in each. Pictures also, by inferior masters, are often excellent ; and may adorn a great house with propriety. We should wish them however to be original. But paltry painting, whether original or copied, like paltry poetry, is disgusting. Horace's rule is admirable in *all matters of taste*.

Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,  
 Et crassum unguentum, & Sardo cum melle papaver  
 Offendunt ; poterat duci quia cœna fine istis :  
 Sic animis natum, inventumque poema juvandis,  
 Si paulum summo discessit, vergit ad imum.

There are some things (as I should translate this passage) which are absolutely necessary ; and which therefore we *must* have ; and there are other things which are merely ornamental ; and which we *need not* have. In the former, we dispense with perfection : but in the latter, we must either have perfection or something very like it : because the end of ornament is to *please* ; and if it fail in this, it does nothing. A man *must* have a dinner, for instance, and tho homely, his appetite gives it a relish. But when a man proceeds to treat his company at dinner with

with a band of musick, unless it be good, he had better omit it. Thus a man *must* have a house; and tho his house be not in elegant taste; yet still it is a valuable accommodation. But if he proceed to ornament his house; unless his ornaments are elegant, his house is better without them;

— poterat duci quia cœna fine istis.

We may add, that paltry copies from great masters take from the dignity of a noble mansion. If the ancestry of such a house had been many years in the possession of it, it may be supposed they might have collected a few original pictures. If nothing of that kind is found in it, the possessors of the house may be supposed to be an upstart race.



## S E C T. II.

FROM Lord Tilney's we proceeded, through the forest, to Woodford ; in the neighbourhood of which are some pleasant views on the right. Ranges of villages succeed : but no idea of forest-scenery. Here and there are little patches of common, circled with wood ; and a variety of villas, shewing more the opulence, than the taste of their owners. Sometimes the half-formed idea of a forest-scene breaks out : but the trees are seldom massed — often only solitary pollards.

At the *Bald-faced stag*, about the tenth stone, a descending plain, marked with many wheel-tracks, and closed with a woody scene, opens agreeably. A nother scene of the same kind rises

about the thirteenth stone. Both these views afford a painter a good opportunity of studying the beauties of a winding road ; forming an easy serpentine line, and diminishing in perspective along a slip of wooded common. In other places, you see it sinking into a dip of the forest ; beyond which it appears winding among boles of trees, till it is lost in a thicket ; and is discovered again, perhaps at a considerable distance, entering a village in a direction, contrary to that, in which it entered the wood.

About Epping the soil is a deep clay ; the country much inclosed, and the meadows covered with a great luxuriance of natural herbage,

The road from Harlow to Chesterford affords nothing striking. It is generally inclosed ; sometimes between high banks ; and seldom opens into the country.

Lord Thomond's improvements, I should suppose, deserve notice. We had time only to give

give them a glance. The rivers and it's banks seemed more natural, than such modes of improvement commonly are; and the scenery, on the whole, has an agreeable air.

Audley-end, or Audley-inn, as it was formerly called, about two miles farther, was built by the Lord treasurer Audley in James the first's time; and was perhaps the most magnificent private house, that ever was erected in England. One of king James's foolish speeches is handed down on this occasion. It was suitable, he said, to a lord treasurer; but too large for a king. If James meant any thing by this expression, it was that his treasurer had grown rich too suddenly. He should either therefore have corrected the abuse; or not have avowed the opinion. The architect of this magnificent palace was Bernard Jansen; whose original plan, tho now much dismembered, was supposed at that day, to be a work of as much taste, as grandeur. A gallery, ninety-five yards in length has been taken down, together with a chappel; and some other spacious apartments, which compleated the back-front, and made at least a fourth part of the whole building. Sir John Vanbrugh  
was

was afterwards employed in forming the remainder into a whole ; in which he was thought to have shewn but little judgment. —— Audley-end however, tho the improved grounds around it did not appear to us very interesting, is still among the places pointed out, as worth seeing on this road.

The country beyond Audley-end grows chalky, bare, exposed, ridgy, and unpleasant ; and, after we leave Chesterford, it becomes flat also. The distances, such as they are (no where furnished with variety of objects, nor ever remote) are terminated with one even line of horizon : and the foregrounds are spungy swamps, producing only rushes, the natural appendages of a fenny country. Gog-magog-hills, which we leave on the right, so little deserve the name of *bills*, that we should not have observed them, unless they had been pointed out to us.

Cambridge makes no appearance at a distance. King's-college chappel, is the only object, which presents itself with any dignity, as we approach.

At the end of Queen's walk, Clare-hall makes a good *perspective*. When you see it  
*in*





*in front*, as you do from Clare-hall-piece, it loses half its grandeur. In full view, you are sure you see the *whole*: whereas a perspective view leaves the imagination room to *extend* the idea.

King's-college chappel gives us on the *outside*, a very beautiful form: *within*, tho' it is an immense, and noble aisle, presenting the adjunct idea of lightness, and solemnity; yet its disproportion disgusts. Such height, and such length, united by such straitened parallels, hurt the eye. You feel immured. Henry the Sixth, we are told, spent twelve hundred pounds in adorning the roof. It is a pity he had not spent it in widening the walls. We should then have had a better form, and should have been relieved from the tedious repetition of roses and portcullisces; which are at best but heavy, and unpleasing ornaments.

Trinity-library is a well proportioned room. In the anti-chappel, the statue of Newton is a master-piece. The character is rather boyish: but the attitude, the expression, the management of the drapery, and indeed the *whole*, and every *part*, are excellent. — A fine statue I have often thought one of the greatest efforts of human art. After the *idea is conceived*, the *model*

*model is made*; which is the great work of genius. As the model answers in statuary to the sketch in painting, it has much of its virtue; and is often more spirited and beautiful, than the statue itself. We however, who cannot have seen the models of the Apollo, or the Laocoön, must be content with the statues: and may remain the more satisfied, as we can conceive nothing in statuary higher. — But still, though the model is the grand effort of genius, the mechanical part appears to be attended with great difficulty. Marble, and bronze, are such untractable materials, that it is wonderful to see them brought to assume, in any degree, the softness of flesh, or the pliant folds of drapery. For myself, therefore, I cannot but look with more commiseration at a wretched statue, than at a bad picture. Some of the chief difficulties of the sculptor are unknown to the painter. The painter has only one surface to manage; one position to secure; and the ductile materials of oil and colour to work with. Michael Angelo was equally skilled in painting, and in statuary; and, we are told, divided his time between them: but for one figure, which he produced in sculpture, he probably painted fifty pictures.

Under

Under the benign influence of such remarks, we forbore to criticize four very indifferent statues, which presented themselves in the Senate-house. The duke of Somerset's is the best; but it has only a low degree of comparison, in its favour. —— The Senate-house is a heavy building; and the gallery makes it heavier.

The public-library, however richly stored with books, is not an object to be shewn. Nor are the public-schools any ornament to the university.



## S E C T. III.

**F**ROM Cambridge the road to Ely led us immediately among fens. Trees, groves, extensive distances, and all the variety of landscape, are now totally gone. All is blank. The eye meets nothing but dreary causeways ;

---

quâ Pontinas via dividit uva paludes.

Stretches of flat, swampy ground ; and long ditches running in strait lines ; and intersected, at right angles, in various parts, by other ditches, make the whole of the scenery on each side. In the room of such beautiful objects as often adorn landscape, the only ornaments of this dreary surface are windmills, those types of exposure ; and these we observed, in some places, accessible only by boats. Their use is to pump off the waters into the channel  
of

of the river: in dry summers this is in part effected naturally. But in so flat a surface the water commonly lies long; and in many parts stretches as far as the eye can reach; the road running through it, like a lengthened mole, in perspective. The whole scene resembles that melancholy one described by Tacitus, in which a great part of the army of Germanicus was lost. “*Angustus trames, vastas inter paludes, quondam a L. Domitio aggeratus. Cætera limosa, tenacia gravi cœno, aut rivis incertis erant.*”

A fen differs from a lake in these particulars. — A lake is the produce of a mountainous country, formed commonly by a rapid river, which carries off the superfluous waters in the continuance of the same stream, that introduced them. — A fen, on the contrary, is generated on a flat by land-springs, or the exuberance of rain-waters; which, having no natural discharge, but by exhalation or through the pores of the earth, stagnate, and putrify upon the surface.

The lake has commonly a beautiful line, formed by the undulation of the rocks, and rising grounds along it's banks. — The fen unites in rushy plashes, with the swampy soil,  
on





on which it borders. Here and there, as the waters subside, the eye traces a line of decaying sedge, and other offensive filth, which is left behind.

Instead of the rocks, and woods, which so beautifully adorn the lake, the fen presents at best only pollard-willows, defouled with slime, and oozy refuse hanging from their branches; standing in lines, and marking the hedge-rows, which appear by degrees, as the waters retire.

Again, the lake is a resplendent mirror, reflecting trees, and rocks from its *margin*; and the cope of heaven from its *bosom*; all glowing in the vivid tints of nature. — The fen, spread with vegetable corruption, or crawling with animal generation, forms a surface, without depth, or fluidity; and is so far from reflecting an image, that, it hardly comes within the definition of a fluid.

Lastly, the lake is generally adorned with light skiffs, skimming, with white sails, along its banks; or with fishing-boats, drawing their circular nets; or groups of cattle laving their sides near the shore. — The fen has no cheerful inhabitants. Here and there may be seen a miserable cow, or horse, (which in quest of a mouthful of better herbage, had ventured too-

far) dragging its legs, besmeared with slime ; and endeavouring with painful operation to get some stable footing.

Through this uncomfortable country we travelled between Cambridge and Ely. It is such a country as a man would wish to see once for curiosity ; but would never desire to visit a second time. One view sufficiently imprints the idea. Indeed where there is but one idea, there can arise no confusion in the recollection.

As we approached Ely, the country assumed a better face. The ground rose out of the fens, from whence this little district assumes the name of the Isle of Ely : a degree of cultivation appeared ; and here and there a few trees gave some life to the scene.

Ely cathedral is a noble object at a distance : and on the spot we found it a beautiful sample of the various modes, and improvements of Saxon architecture — very inferior indeed to pure Gothic ; yet much beyond that mixed style, of which many cathedrals are composed. In point of mere magnificence, it equals any thing, I believe, in the kingdom.

On entering the nave at the great gate, we have an effect in architecture, which is always pleasing





pleasing in painting — that of a *graduating light*. It was not, I suppose, for the purpose of producing this effect, that the windows at the entrance are gloomy. The gloom however is solemn ; and among so many arches, and pillars exceedingly grand. As you walk up the nave, the light begins more and more to steal in upon you ; till you arrive near the transept, where it sheds all it's lustre from a magnificent lantern-dome placed above it. —— We meet with this *graduating effect* of light sometimes in nature : but I have not often met with it in architecture. —— We regretted however, that we saw this noble fabric in much confusion : the chapter were altering the choir ; and the ground being lowered, coffins, and monuments, and heaps of earth, and engines, and broken pews, and rails, and scaffolding were all so mingled together, that it was impossible to judge, either of it's present or of it's intended effect.

Contiguous to the cathedral is a piece of architecture, purely Gothic, which goes by the name of the *parish-church*. The internal proportions, and harmony of this building pleased us much. It is in miserable plight ; and some of the windows are even blocked up :

but if it were repaired, and *elegantly* beautified, it would perhaps be one of the most pleasing rooms of the kind in England. We were informed at Ely, by our conductor that King's-college chapel in Cambridge was modelled from this structure. If it was, the architect has strangely mistaken the proportions. King's-college chapel is in length two hundred and ninety one feet; but being divided in the middle by a skreen, the length of each part is one hundred and forty five feet. In breadth it is forty five, and in height seventy eight. The chapel at Ely is in length one hundred feet, in breadth forty six, and in height sixty. The first proportion is certainly a bad one; the latter, highly beautiful.

## S E C T. IV.

THE isle of Ely was formerly the site of a monastery; and was more than once, from the difficulty of access to it, considered as a fortress. The most memorable siege it underwent, was conducted by William the conqueror; and it is worth a short detail, were it only to shew the nature of the country, of which it gives a stronger impression, than any description can do. This siege is cursorily mentioned by Rapin; but Bentham, in his Antiquities of Ely, has collected the best detail of it: from whom I have extracted the few following particulars.

Thurston was then the abbot. He, and his monks having received great favours from Harold, espoused the part of Edgar Etheling; and their inclinations being known, many of the discontented barons, at a time when

the Normans were held in common detestation, retired with their adherents to the isle of Ely, as to an asylum. Among these were the potent earls of Chester and Northumberland. This conflux obtaining by degrees the appearance of a garrison, the chiefs of it came to a resolution to fortify the isle against William ; and chose Hereward, lord of Brune in Lincolnshire, to be their commander. Hereward having been banished in a late reign, had spent his youth abroad as a soldier of fortune. His father dying soon after the battle of Hastings, he came home with a hope of accommodating his affairs, as he had given no offence to William. But finding his lands bestowed on a Norman, he got together a few of his old tenants, and in the first excesses of his rage, took forcible possession. This action, drawing on him the resentment of William, he joined the mal-contents in the isle of Ely, where he was considered as a great acquisition.

In the beginning of the year 1069, William drew his forces towards the fens, against the garrison of Ely, which grew daily more formidable. Having secured all the passes, on the east, which led into Suffolk, he began

a prodigious mole on the west, which he carried two miles into the water, forming it on piles, and lining it with bags of earth. His intention was to join it to the isle, as the best means of access to the town. He had almost compleated his works, when Hereward falling out, drove him from them,— attacked his mole; and in a few hours destroyed the operations of a summer.

Early the next year however, William returned; and having been unsuccessful in his last attempt on the western side, he endeavoured to secure a more favourable passage over the fens on the east, where a neck of land running out, would assist his labour. But tho' he gained an advantage in one point, he lost it in another. The passage was short; but the waters were dangerous. The tide often, on this side, forces it's way up the Ouse, and other rivers of the fens, in an extraordinary manner; and the floods occasioned by this influx, of which William was not aware, destroyed his works.

The year however was not yet far advanced. He called a council therefore at Brandon, in which it was determined to make a new attempt, where he had made one at

first. With great dispatch he got together magazines, and materials, and laid the foundation of a new mole. — In the mean time Hereward, wishing to check his operations, before he had proceeded the length he had done before, entered his camp in the habit of a fisherman ; and having obtained the intelligence he wanted, made a sally in his boats (probably by night) burnt the Norman forts, and magazines, and rendered all farther attempts this year, impracticable.

The siege however having now continued two years, the monks, at whose expence it was chiefly carried on, began to be heartily tired of it. Their larders were devoured — their cellars were exhausted — their pastures depopulated ; and their corn-ricks consumed. They could not have received more injury from the enemy himself. They were neglected also, as well as plundered. When the abbey-bell rang for dinner, instead of sitting down in their own hall to a quiet meal, they were considered rather as intruders. Every chief took his seat at table under his own arms, which hanging against the wall, denoted his place. The poor monks got what they could. Tired therefore of this expence, and neglect,

neglect, some writers say, they found means, in the third year of the siege, to introduce the king's troops. Others say, that William made a new mole, and being more fortunate, took the place by assault. That the monks were dissatisfied with their military associates, is beyond a doubt. But they seem to have been patient sufferers: for when William, in the year 1071, took the place, it appears, that the monastery fell as much under his displeasure, as the garrison.



## S E C T. V.

FROM Ely we proposed to cross the country by Lynn to Houghton : but being informed, that the fens beyond Ely were impassable, we had no inclination to make the trial ; having seen enough of the fens already to have no desire to see them in a still more inhospitable state. We altered our course therefore, and took our route by Mildon-hall.

The road, through five or six miles, is a good turnpike, raised over swampy grounds, cut every where across with drains, and ditches, as we found them in our approach to Ely. Rows of pollards with slime hanging from their branches, marked the limits of hedges, which emerged, as the waters drained off. In the mean time a circumscribed horizon of fenny surface was our only distance.

If

If it had been remote, it might have lost in obscurity it's disgusting form. But it's disagreeable features were apparent to the utmost verge of it's extent.

We soon however found, that we were in the neighbourhood of a country still more disagreeable, at least for travelling, than a fenny one. This was a vast tract of sand. At Soham, which is a considerable village, we *landed*, if I may so speak, from the fens; and hoped we had now gotten upon stable ground. But we soon found our mistake. We had scarce left it, when we entered upon the sands; and only changed the colour of our landscape; both of them being equally wild, open, and dreary. Not a tree was to be seen. The line of the horizon was scarcely broken with a single bush. The wildness was in some degree lessened by a few patch-faced sheep, and a few straggling cattle grazing in the greener parts. —— But this little appearance of herbage soon went off. In a few miles the country became an absolute desert. Nothing was to be seen on either side, but sand, and scattered gravel, without the least

least vegetation ; a mere African desert : ager arenosus, unâ specie æqualis, nudus gignentium\*. In some places this sandy waste occupied the whole scope of the eye : in other places, at a distance, we could see a skirting of green, with a few straggling bushes, which being surrounded by sand, appeared like a stretch of low land, shooting into the sea. The whole country indeed had the appearance of a beaten sea-coast ; but without the beauties, which adorn that species of landscape. In many places we saw the sand even driven into ridges ; and the road totally covered ; which indeed was every where so deep, and heavy, that four horses, which we were obliged to take, could scarce in the slowest pace, drag us through it. It was a little surprizing to find such a piece of *absolute desert* almost in the heart of England. To us it was a novel idea. We had not even heard of it.

In some parts of the northern coast of Scotland, dry, floating sands are very dangerous, often covering lands and houses. I have

\* Sallust. Bell. Jugurth.

somewhere

somewhere met with an account, (tho I cannot readily quote my authority), that these Scotch sands were once fixed by a sort of matted-grass, which cattle will not eat; but the country people destroying the grass for fuel, an act of parliament passed in the reign of George II., to protect it. — It has been recommended, I have also heard, to the Norfolk gentlemen, to sow this grass, as a mean to fix these sands.

By degrees the country acquires a better surface. Breaks of herbage begin, here and there, to arise; but it is dry, and meagre, something between grass, and rushes, thinly scattered over plots of sand. No animals are seen, except a few rabbits, which are the only inhabitants it can provide for.

At Brandon (called by the country people Bran) we crossed the Ouse into Norfolk. Our road at first led through an intermixture of sand, and down; here and there varied with a few trees; but, on the whole, very unpleasing, and unpicturesque. A little before we reach Swaffham, we get into lanes.

A few miles on the north of Brandon, lies a small peninsula called Helgay-fen, consisting of about one thousand acres. Periodically, in six or seven years, this little district, we were informed, is visited by an innumerable host of field-mice; which begin a very destructive depredation: but precisely, at the same time, a flight of owls arrive from Norway, (of the large, white species, called the horned-owl), as if drawn by instinct. The owls immediately attack the invaders, and live deliciously, till they have entirely destroyed them. In the mean time they are revered by the peasants, as the Dutch revere storks. When the mice are all devoured, the owls return quietly home. I dare not venture to vouch the truth of this strange story; as we were informed of it too late to examine the particulars on the spot: but I believe there is at least some foundation for it\*.

Similar accounts we sometimes meet with. Not long ago, a swarm of locusts appeared in such multitudes about Athens, that the people

\* See an account of this fact in the Gent. Mag. vol. xxii.  
were

were greatly alarmed for their crops of corn, But unexpectedly a flight of storks visited the country, at the same time, and very soon dispatched the invaders.

Swaffham is a neat, elegant town. The streets are open ; and well-built. The church is handsome, and stands pleasantly. — Every thing indeed, about the town, was in such exactness, and order, that the whole seemed as if it were under the direction of a single person.









## S E C T. VI.

**F**ROM Swaffham the road still continued sandy ; sometimes running through furzy-commons, and sheep-walks, which are every where inhabited by numerous flocks.

Near Newton we leave, on the left, the ruins of Castle-acre, once the mansion of the great earl Warren ; and able still to impress the idea of it's ancient splendor. The ruin of the citadel only now remains. It makes a kind of ragged appearance (for it's form, in a good degree is lost) on a rising ground, containing about an acre. But the whole site of the castle, and it's dependencies, are said to have covered eighteen acres ; which shews the immense power of the chief, who distributed such of his vassals, as were <sup>as</sup> his

usual guard, in so wide a circumference around him.

A little beyond Lexham the road passes through a valley, with a rising carpet-lawn on each side. The view is singular, and pleasing. The open country points afterwards into lanes; which grow more pleasant as we approach Raynham.

We saw nothing striking in the situation, or house at Raynham. Our errand indeed was chiefly to see Salvator's Bellisarius; which was presented by the late king of Prussia, to the grandfather of the present lord Townshend. It is a very noble picture, of which the print gives but an inadequate idea. The unfortunate chief stands resting against a wall. He occupies almost the whole piece; leaving room only for two or three soldiers, who make a distant group. The story, tho told in this simple manner, can hardly be mistaken. A blind figure, squallid, tho dressed in rich armour — discovering great dignity of character, both in his own appearance

appearance, and from the distant respect shewn him by the spectators — leads the memory easily to recollect Bellisarius. — The *composition* is as pleasing as the *design*. All the objects of the piece are so contrived, as to form a good *whole*. — The *harmony of the colouring* too is excellent. An agreeable sober tint runs through the picture. Scarce a touch is out of tune. If any, it is a streak of light in the sky, on the left. Bellisarius's drapery is rich in the highest degree; and yet harmonious. His mantle is yellow: his fash of a white, silvery hue; and his armour, steel. — The light also is well dispos'd. In *expression* there is the most deficiency. Salvator has thrown over the hero's face a quantity of squalid hair; and the spectator must, in a great measure, make out the expression from his own imagination. I speak only of the face, which wants something of the *dignity* of wretchedness; in the *action* and *character*, greatness, and misery are well united.

In lord Burlington's gallery at Chiswick, we see the same subject by Vandyck. Both those pictures are equally celebrated; but I think Salvator's is greatly superior. With

regard to *design*, Vandyck's accompanying figures engage the eye too much ; and confound the story. It is better imagined also to represent the old chief, as Salvator has done, in his military habit ; than dressed in a civil garment. The story so told is better told ; and the mind is more interested. In point of *composition* also we give the preference to Salvator. Vandyck's detached figures are no groups. Nor is there that *harmony of colouring*, and agreeable mass of light in his picture, which strikes us in the other. *Expression* is the only part, in which Vandyck enters into contest with Salvator. There is a union of great *dignity*, and *wretchedness* in every part of his principal figure ; and the expression of the soldier is inimitable. He is certainly however too interesting for a secondary figure ; at the same time, his expression is an index to the spectator, and refers him to Bellisarius, as the object of concern. After all, perhaps there may be as much *expression* in the wonder mixed with pity, and the respectful distance of Salvator's soldiers, as in the melancholy dejection of Vandyck's. Such a mode of expression certainly gives an air of *grandeur*

grandeur to the fallen chief, which Vandyck has lost by mixing him with low characters.

Besides this picture of Bellifarius, lord Townsенд has another very capital one— Mary of Medicis by Reubens. This is an admirable portrait. In expression it excells. Mary's misfortunes, after the death of her husband, Henry IV., had shrivelled her form, and thrown the gloom of melancholy over her countenance. But here it is arrayed in all it's courtly smiles, it's chearful air, it's liveliness, and sprightly smirk, which might be natural, but were most probably assumed. The colouring is equal to any effort of the pencil: and the display of light on the head, and linen round the neck is happily introduced. The hands are very inferior to the head; and it would perhaps be no injury to the picture, if they were removed by a narrower frame.— Mary of Medicis was a great encourager of the arts. She saw the merit of Reubens, and professed herself his patroness. At her request he engaged in that noble work, which adorns the Luxemburgh gallery.

Pictures, like these, suggest an idea of painting between history, and portrait, which might be pursued, I think, with great advantage. History-painting, like epic poetry, is certainly the grandest production of the art. But we seldom see a history-piece compleatly executed, even by the best masters. To conceive a noble design — to manage the various *parts* — character — expression — action — drawing — drapery — and to *unite* all these parts harmoniously by composition — colouring — and light — is not easily accomplished. There is at least a better chance for success, if the painter should select some historical character, as Salvator has done here ; and studying it attentively, lay out his whole strength upon it. He might easily make it intelligible, by some little appendage. Moses might be distinguished by resting on the *two tables of the covenant* : St. Paul, by holding in his hand, *an epistle to the Romans* : Cæsar, by a map of Gaul : Peter of Moscovy, by a plan of Pittsburgh ; and so on. I conceive indeed, that many awkward resemblances would often

often be made of all these characters; yet still there might be a better chance for a good picture, than when these characters are brought into some historical *composition*. There are fewer points to guard against, and of course less danger of failing. — In general indeed we stand a better chance of a pleasing picture, even from *common portraits*, than from *compositions*. And indeed, if I were about to furnish a gallery from pictures now in my memory, I should chuse to have it adorned with portraits; as I remember more portraits, that are throughout pleasing pictures, than I remember history-pieces. Among the first that occur to my memory are the Cornaro-family in Northumberland-house — a full-length of Charles I., over a chimney-piece in Hampton-court — a portrait of Christiern king of Denmark, in the same palace — Reubens, and his wife, at Blenheim — a portrait of an earl of Danby at Hamilton-house, in Scotland; and some others, which appeared to me throughout excellent. Whereas I hardly remember one historical piece, however beautiful in many of its parts, in which there was not something disgusting.



## S E C T. VII.

**F**ROM *Raynham* a few miles brought us to *Houghton-hall*, which the late lord Orford, formerly sir Robert Walpole, built, and furnished with a noble collection of pictures.

Houghton-hall stands low; and is surrounded by an ample park. It was built on the site of an old family mansion; and such trees as *formerly* adorned it, are large; but, in general the plantations are modern; and it is easy to trace, from the growth of the woods, and the vestiges of hedge-rows, where the ambition of the minister made his ornamental inroads into the acres of his inheritance. Taste however then was not. No Brown, at that time, existed, to conduct the channels of wealth. And tho there are many good scenes in this park, (as it is impossible

impossible to have wood without beauty) yet an eye used to the juster improvements of taste, is every where hurt; nor can the magnificence of the *whole* atone for a number of awkward *parts*.

The house is a stately, heavy building, joined by colonades to large wings; the whole extending four hundred and fifty feet. The stables are superb. The rooms are of a moderate size, except the hall, and the saloon; the former of which is decorated in a very pleasing manner. It is plain, simple, and elegant. I should have liked it better, if the bases of the statues, and all the other ornamental parts, had been of the same plain stone-colour, with which the room is painted. The furniture, and decorations of the whole house are grand, and rich. We scarce observed any instances of littleness or affectation. The window-cases, and doors are of mahogany, gilt, and very grand.

But the house is not the object at Houghton. The pictures attract the attention: and as this is the most celebrated collection in England, I examined them with what care I was able; and shall remark such of them as particularly pleased me.—I ought perhaps

perhaps to apologize for differing in opinion, on some occasions from Mr. Walpole, who has printed a catalogue of these pictures with remarks on several of them. But I shall always give reasons for my opinion; and my opinion, of course can have no more weight, than the reasons, which support it. I am the less scrupulous in differing from Mr. Walpole, as, in honour of his father's collection, his criticisms seem plainly inclined to the more favourable side. Mine, I hope, will not be thought too severe, tho there are very few pictures in this noble collection, which *intirely* pleased me. I had the satisfaction however, in my own vindication, to observe, that among the multitude of capital pictures, which sir Joshua Reynolds saw in his journey through Holland, and Flanders, there is scarce one, in which he does not find something he dislikes.

## THE COMMON PARLOUR.

A portrait of Gibbons, by Kneller. This is one of the best pictures I have seen by this slovenly master. He seldom painted with care

care, tho he was able to paint well, when he took pains.

A sketch of king William on horse-back, by Kneller. The *freedom, spirit, and harmony* of this sketch are admirable. The great picture at Hampton-court, painted from it, hath none of these qualities.

A cook's-shop, by Teniers. I mention this picture, because it is esteemed a very valuable one. I saw little in it myself, except *good colouring*. The composition I thought very bad.

But the cook's-shop, on the opposite side, by Martin de Vos, is equal to any praise. Martin was Snyder's master. He had less reputation than his scholar; but more merit. This picture is a masterpiece. It displays a grand confusion of objects; and yet preserves a noble whole. The several parts too are admirably painted. The greyhound, and the cat, the turkey, and the fawn are all excellent. If there be any deficiency, it is in point of light, which might have been better distributed. This picture is seven feet ten inches long; by five feet, eight.

A Bacchanalian, by Reubens, painted in his best style of colouring. The *composition, light, and*

and expression, are all admirable. With regard to particulars, the woman, and the fucking satyrines are particularly beautiful.

Sir Thomas Chaloner, by Vandyck, is a very fine portrait.

A friar's head, by Reubens, is painted with admirable warmth of colouring.

In Rembrandt's wife, by Rembrandt himself, are united all the beauties of the master; his strong colouring — his management of light, and the spirit of his touches.

The library, and two or three bed-chambers, which we were carried into next, contain nothing very striking. In the drawing-room are several good portraits, which would have attracted the eye in any other place.

#### THE SALOON.

On a table stands an admirable bronze, by John of Bologna. It represents a Roman carrying off a Sabine.

The *stoning of St. Stephen* by *Le Sœur*, I have heard called one of the capital pieces in this collection. I am sorry to say, it did not please me. There is an awkwardness in the

the figures, particularly in the principal one, which is very displeasing ; and it has besides so many offensive parts, that no beauties (and it has many) could atone for them in my eyes ; or bring it to them with satisfaction.

The holy family, by Vandyck, is another celebrated picture, which I could not admire ; tho Mr. Walpole tells us, it was twice sold for fourteen hundred pounds. There is nothing, it is true, disgusting in it, except perhaps a little frippery ; but as *a whole*, it wants composition ; a sobriety in the *general complexion* of the colouring ; and a harmony in the tints. It is nine feet by seven.

*Mary Magdalen washing the feet of Christ*, by Reubens. This picture is one of the noblest monuments of the genius of Reubens, that is to be seen in England. It contains fourteen figures, as large as the life. We seldom see, in one piece, so numerous a collection of expressive heads. — The point of time seems to be taken, just after Christ had said, *Thy sins be forgiven thee\**. An air of disgust runs through the whole table. The expression

\* See Luke vii.

in Simon's face is admirable. With whatever view he invited his divine guest, it is very evident he was disappointed. The whole picture indeed is an excellent comment upon St. Luke. Our Saviour's face has great sweetnes, grace, and dignity. All the other characters are fine; the two full faces, especially, which are nearest our Saviour. The attendants are all good figures; particularly the girl carrying the dish. The Magdalen is the worst figure in the picture. She is rather awkward and clumsy: but her passion is well expressed. A penitential sorrow, beyond the sence of anything but it's own unworthyness, has taken possession of her. Her eyes are finely coloured with high-swoln grief. Among deceptions, we seldom see a better, than the watery hue of that tear which is nearest the eye. Our Saviour's hands are bad.

We are *inclined* to dwell more on the *parts* of this picture, than on the *whole*. And yet the *composition*, tho not perfect, is far from being disagreeable. It's chief want, as a *whole*, is a balance of *shade*. Reubens is often, I think, faulty in this particular. This picture is eight feet by six.

*Titian's*

*Titian's son, and his nurse*, by Titian. The latter is a dismal character, probably so intended; but well painted.

The Cyclops, by Luca Jordano. The nearest figure is awkward; the breast and arms of the other are good.

Dædalus, and Icarus, by Le Brun. The latter is a fine figure.

#### THE CARLO MARATT ROOM.

We have here a collection of about twenty pictures, by this master, and his scholars — almost a compleat school. It is esteemed very valuable; was purchased at a great expence; and is much admired by connoisseurs. It hurts me to dissent from any general opinion: but the works of this master have always appeared in my eye to want something, which every good picture should have. I can see in them many fine heads, great sweetnes in the Madonas, broad folds of drapery, elegant attitudes, and pleasing expression: but still they are unpleasant pictures. There seems to be a deficiency both in the *colouring*, and in the *execution*. — The *colouring* is gaudy.

A glare,

A glare, which hurts the eye, runs through every picture. There is no sobriety in the tints; no harmony; no balance. Instead of a whole, you have only a piece of splendid patch-work. — The *execution* is as disagreeable. There is so much effeminate softness, and want of spirit in it, that you do not think you are surveying the work of a great master; but rather of some pupil, copying with fear, and exactness. It is not necessary for a painter to execute with the fire of Bourgognone, but without some degree of freedom, and spirit, his *execution* will never please.

The head of Clement IX. appeared to me, as far as I could compare my ideas, to be a very inferior picture to that at Chiswick, by the same master. That picture, as I remember, is warmly coloured, and even touched with spirit. This is tamely executed; and spread over with a bluish tinge, which is a female tint, and here unnatural.

#### THE EMBROIDERED BED-CHAMBER.

*A holy family*, by Nic. Poussin (5. 7. by 4. 3.) In this picture the *composition*, group-  
E ing,

*ing, heads, characters, expression, and drapery* are all good: but there is neither harmony, nor beauty in the colouring. A disagreeable blackness pervades the whole.

*Two cattle pieces*, by Rosa of Tivoli. The cattle in both are finely painted; but the composition in neither is good.

#### THE CABINET.

*Reubens' wife*, by Vandyck. This is an admirable portrait. I should not hesitate to call it a master-piece. She is at full length, dressed in black satin, with a hat. Nothing can be easier, more elegant, and graceful than this figure. The colouring too is beautiful; and the whole picture; and every part of it, is pleasing. This portrait I should place among the first in my collection, mentioned in the 39th page. — When we see such a portrait as this by Vandyck; and in the same collection, one of his historical pieces, (the holy family just mentioned) which falls greatly below excellence, there is room for candour to believe, that Reubens might have had other motives, than those of envy, and jealousy, (which are the motives commonly ascribed)

ed) for advising his favourite pupil to apply himself to portrait-painting, rather than to history. The advice appears to have been very judicious. Vandyck does not seem to have much invention, nor to have excelled in composition. I do not remember that his composition pleased me in any picture, (if we may judge from prints,) in which he has many figures to manage. The family-picture at Wilton, tho in his own way, is very deficient in this respect\*.

*Reubens' family*, by Jordano of Antwerp, is a mere collection of heads: but every head is a piece of nature.

*Christ laid into the sepulchre*, by Parmigiano. There is great expression in the figures; and great beauty in the colouring, and execution of this picture: but the painter has allowed himself so little scope (for it is scarce above miniature size) that it gives a poverty, and minuteness to his picture. It was probably intended as a design for a larger piece.

A very fine head of Innocent X., by Velasco.

\* See remarks on this subject, in the Appendix to the Western Tour.

*Friars distributing alms to the poor*, by John Miel. There is a good balance of light, and shade; and an agreeable whole in this picture.

Two pictures by Bourgognone. One of them represents a battle; the other, the field after it; in which the principal group is a dying officer, confessing to a friar. Both are excellent pictures; but the first is a masterpiece.

A sketch by Rubens of the middle compartment of the banqueting-house at White-hall. The freedom, and spirit of it are admirable.

Six sketches by the same master, of triumphal arches; equally free; and beautiful.

*Bathsheba bringing Abishag to David*, by Vanderwerffe. This picture is as highly finished, as the finest enamel; and yet the freedom and spirit of it are preserved. The group is good. In Bathsheba you see the remains of a very fine woman: but in David there is a mixture of youth; which by no means gives us the idea of that total decrepitude, under which the bible-history represents him. Abishag is the fair, young damsel of the text; and her modest, and maidenly behaviour

behaviour are finely expressed. — After all, we survey such high-finished pictures only as curiosities. Their style is an effect of vitiated taste. They barely please the eye: they want that strength, and boldness; that energy and fire, which raise raptures.

Two flower-pieces, by Van-Huyfsum. These admirable pictures are in the same style of neatness, as the last. But in flowers the *finished manner* is liable to no exceptions. Nobody expects to look at a flower-piece with emotion. If it *please the eye*, it is sufficient. Van-Huyfsum seems to be a greater master of composition and the knowledge of light, than Baptiste. In most of the capital pictures, that I have seen by Baptiste, particularly in those of the duke of St. Alban's at Windsor, the eye is hurt by ill-balanced composition, and patches of light. But in the few I have met with by Van-Huyfsum, all is well put together, and well massed. In these two pictures, especially in that, which consists solely of flowers, he is particularly excellent both in the composition, and in the distribution of light. His manner has not the least stiffness; tho every object, flowers,

fruits, and insects, are finished with the last characteristic touch, and tint of nature.

Two landscapes in the manner of Salvator, by Bourgognone. They are well touched; and like the master they imitate; but the composition is very indifferent in both.

*The death of Joseph*, by Velasco. This is a noble, and affecting picture. The story is well told. The characters rise to the imagination. The expression is just: the composition good; the lights broad: in short, the *whole*, and every *part* of this picture is pleasing.

#### THE MARBLE PARLOUR.

The earl of Danby, at full length, by Vandyck, is excellent in all it's parts, and in the management of the whole.

Two fruit-pieces, by Michael Angelo, are both well-painted; but that which hangs near Sir Thomas Wharton, is a confused composition.

## THE GALLERY.

This large room was originally intended for a green-house: but when Sir Robert Walpole lost his employments in the year 1742, he fitted it up for the pictures, which he brought from Downing-street.

The doctors of the church consulting on the immaculate conception, by Guido, deserves our first attention. This very celebrated picture, we are told by Mr. Walpole, was bought in Italy by lord Orford; and sent to Civita Vecchia to be shipped for England. But Innocent XIII., who was then pope, unwilling that such a treasure should be carried out of the country, remanded it. At length however, through his particular regard for the character of lord Orford, he permitted its exportation. — From this account one should imagine it had uncommon merit. The colouring is certainly exquisite. There is a clearness, and brightness, and brilliancy in it which we rarely find; and hence, I suppose, arrives its chief merit among connoisseurs. The draperies also are broad, and painted in a noble style. The heads

too, in general, are finely touched. The doctor in red particularly is an admirable figure; and the virgin who sits in the clouds cloathed in white, is throughout *immaculate*, and is as lovely and charming a form, as the imagination of man can conceive. These beauties must needs be acknowledged: but still the picture, I think, on the whole, unpleasing. In the first place, *the story is ill told.* The dispute about the immaculate conception was one of the fiercest, in which the Roman church engaged. But here it is carried on with a most provoking indifference. All is still, and quiet. Each disputant seems possessed of that calmness, which might suit an evangelist writing a gospel. — If the painter objected to the character of an enraged polemic, yet surely a proper zeal, an earnestness at least, might have been allowed.

— Here was an opportunity also to pay a compliment to one side, or the other; and it would have furnished copious room for expression, if he had introduced one party laying down his point; and the other abashed, angry, or convinced. — Or if the painter had not chosen to decide a matter so important, he ought certainly to have carried

*ried on the dispute in some shape*, if he meant to tell his story with truth. — But even if the truth of history had been preserved, there would remain, I fear, still a great deficiency in the *composition*, and in the *distribution of light*: and, what is surprizing, there is but little *harmony*, I think, in the colouring, which is but ill-atoned for by it's brilliancy. — It is also disgusting to see so great a difference between the carnations of the two principal figures. The two doctors seem to be the inhabitants of two different climates. This however is not very uncommon in Guido's pictures. The wits sometimes say, that in the same piece, one of his pictures will appear roasted, and another boiled. (8. 11. by 6.)

The prodigal son, by Salvator Rosa, is painted with the full spirit, freedom, and force of this pleasing master. That agreeable style of colouring, that sober, pleasant tint, which issued so often from his pallet, is here displayed in great perfection. But this is all that can be said for the picture. The character of the prodigal is ill-preserved. Instead of a melancholy posture, brooding over his misery, or the madness of despair imprecating curses upon his folly,

folly, he is represented in a cold, unanimated attitude, kneeling indeed ; but without any fervour either of passion, or devotion. His garb is tattered ; but his face wears the hue of plenty. The muscles of his arms, and legs are full-fed ; nor has he that apparent distress about him, which his condition required. —— The appendages of the piece too are ill put together ; and instead of compleating a *whole*, tend rather to destroy it. But of all the disagreeable parts of this picture, the cow which runs athwart the prodigal, and cuts him at right angles, is the most displeasing.

Meleager, and Atalanta, by Reubens. This is a large cartoon, (20. 9. by 10. 7.) designed for tapestry ; and purposely therefore painted in a light, gawdy stile. However proper it might be for *this use*, it certainly makes a *bad picture*. It is a vast, glaring, disgusting object ; and ill-suited to the company it appears in. There is little composition in it ; and no balance of light, and shade. Atalanta is a good figure ; but all the other parts are bad, some of the dogs particularly so.

Four markets by Snyders. The first is a fish-market. The composition is good. There is a profusion of parts blended into an agreeable whole.

whole. One circumstance only injures the general shape — the formal repetition of a man on each side of the picture. The light is well-disposed.

The second is a fowl-market. The disposition of the light here is bad ; tho a slight alteration would have made it pleasing. Had the swan been placed in the room of the boar's-head, it would have made a good mass.

The third is a green-market. Nothing can be better managed, or more delightfully painted, than the mass of greens : but the picture is disagreeably broken into two parts.

The fourth is a fruit-market. The fruit is richly painted : but the picture is ill-composed. The figures are good ; but there is no whole (11. 1. by 6. 9.)

A lioness very well painted by Reubens.

An old woman's head also by Reubens. The face is good : but the drapery, and every thing else is disagreeable.

A head by Boll, finely painted.

A holy family, by Procaccino. The heads in this picture are very fine ; but there is a disagreeable glare of light.

An usurer, and his wife, by Quintin Matsis of Antwerp. This picture is nearly the same,

as

as that, which Matsis painted for Charles the first at Windsor. There is infinite labour in it: but these laboured pieces do not please, like those thrown off in all the freedom of genius. They have the appearance of being merely mechanical.

The exposition of Cyrus, by Castiglione. This master seems to have understood the doctrine of harmony; or the production of effect from a combination of according tints. At least, I have made this observation on the few of Castiglione's pictures, I have seen.

In this picture, the harmonious arrangement of tints is very striking. Each colour unites so kindly with its neighbour, that, altho the whole is as rich as possible, every part is in perfect repose. —— The effect, which Castiglione produces by an effusion of rich colours, Salvator produces by one *sober tint*. They are both masters of the art of harmonizing a picture: but Castiglione's art is the greater, as he has more variety of tints to manage. With regard to particulars, all the figures in this picture are beautiful. The dog is finely painted: but as it is so capital in the story, it is not enough concerned in the action. The scene is scarce sylvan enough for the subject.  
(2. 4. by 3. 6.)

The

The companion of the last picture, by the same master, is perhaps only an effusion of fancy, which Castiglione was fond of indulging. The subject of it is certainly obscure. It has all that effect of harmony, which we admire in the other. There are some objects, a cow, a dog, and a goat, disagreeably introduced: but every thing else is beautiful.

The adoration of the shepherds, by old Palma, forms a disagreeable whole. But there is fine expression in the shepherd dressed in green.

A nymph and shepherd, by Carlo Cignani. The nymph is a charming figure: the composition is beautiful; and the light would have been well thrown, if the ram, a part of the boy's back, and the bottle had been in shade. (4. i. by 3. 4.)

Reubens' waggon — a landscape, which goes under that title from the introduction of a broken waggon on the foreground. There is little of the hue of nature in this landscape; and as little of the effect of harmony. The hills are green, the sky is blue; and the rest of the objects of a brownish tint. In all this there is discord. It is called a moonlight: but there is nothing of the shadowy dusk

dusk of evening in it; nor of the lunar splendor. — In the *composition*, there is much nature; but it is rather too unadorned. Bolfwert's print has contributed to make this landscape famous. (4. 1. by 2. 10.)

The sacrifice of Isaac by Rembrandt. We seldom see a picture of this master in so good a style. We have here something like Italian elegance. Abraham's head is finely painted; and full of every expression, which the subject could inspire. Isaac's body is a fine piece of anatomy, and colouring. The angel is a bad figure, and injures the whole. The falling knife is an unpleasant circumstance so near the eye. *Bodies in motion* should never be brought close to the sight. — There is a peculiar delicacy in Abraham's covering his son's face with his hand — a delicacy which one should least have looked for in this master. We have a delicate touch of the same kind in Virgil: but in Virgil we might expect it. The passage I allude to, is that, in which Dædalus is introduced representing, in sculpture, the history of his own life. When he comes to that part, in which his son was concerned, the poet, with his usual feeling, tells us, the artist could not proceed:

— Tu quoque magnam  
 Partem opere in tanto, fineret dolore, Icare, haberet.  
 Bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro :  
 Bis patriæ cecidere manus. —

The old man, and his sons, gathering sticks, by Salvator. This picture is not painted in Salvator's usual manner. Tho it cannot be called a rich picture; yet there are many more tints employed, than in the prodigal son, or in the generality of Salvator's historical compositions. For myself, I prefer his sober style. Salvator can produce an effect with his sober browns; but does not (in this picture at least) make out so good a one with a greater variety of colours. The composition, and figures in this picture are good: but I have no great relish for such low unmeaning subjects. (6. by 4. 2.)

The adoration of the shepherds, by Guido. The single figures, especially their heads, and actions, are fine; but a *whole* is seldom found in an Italian picture. This is an octagon, on every side, 3.

Scipio's continence, by Nic. Poussin. The great beauty of this picture consists in the chastness, and classical purity of its style. We admire the elegance, and simplicity of the whole;

whole; tho in the composition there is nothing very striking. With regard to particulars—excellence, and defect, are pretty equally distributed among the figures. (5. 2. by 3. 8.)

Moses striking the rock, by Nic. Poussin. This is by many degrees, a more masterly performance, than its companion. It's purity of style is the same: but the composition, the groups, and figures are all better. The principal figure is not perhaps enough principal. The great deficiency of this picture is in the distribution of light. It is not massed so as to make a whole. —— This piece was painted by Nic. Poussin for Stella, who afterwards, in compliment, engraved it. (6. 3. by 3. 11.)

The adoration of the Magi, by C. Maratt. I thought this the best picture of Maratt's I had ever seen. There is great simplicity in the whole; and the figures are fine. —— But it is a pity this master could paint nothing without a profusion of staring colours. (6. 11. by 4. 4.)

Solomon's idolatry, by Stella. This is the only piece I ever saw by this master. It represents Solomon sacrificing, in the midst of his idolatrous women; and exhibits a very high scene of what may be called, voluptuous devotion.

tion. We cannot have a stronger idea of the affecting story of that wife profligate. It is painted on black, and gold marble; which is, in many parts, left as the ground; and gives a great richness to the picture. —— The characteristic of this piece is *elegance*, which is displayed in the whole, and in every part. (3. 5. by 1. 10.)

A sea-port by Claude Lorain. If the most vivid effusions of light, and the most harmonious touches of nature can make a good landscape, this undoubtedly is one. But here is no country described; no beautiful objects; no shapes; no composition.

The other picture by the same hand, in this gallery, describes a *plaising* country: but, for want of good composition, all its beauteous tints, and hues of nature, can scarce bring the eye to it with pleasure. —— On the account of this great deficiency in composition, obvious in so many of the works of Claude, I have thought few masters are less indebted to the engraver, than he is. The print gives us the *composition* chiefly of the master, which is what we least value in Claude. But it can give us no idea of that lovely colouring, in which alone his works excell all others.



## S E C T. VIII.

SINCE these remarks were made, this grand collection of pictures hath been sold to the empress of Russia; and now exists in England only in the prints, which that great encourager of the arts, Mr. Alderman Boydell, hath had engraved from them. The drawings, from which these prints were made, adorn a gallery in Pall-Mall, which the alderman built on purpose to receive them. I never saw these drawings; but from the hands employed on them, I suppose they are good.

For the amusement of the reader, I shall annex to my own remarks, the value which was set on each picture by the Empress's agents. It will appear, that the valuer of this collection of pictures hath not weighed them in my scales. Which of us is right, is not my part to decide. All I can say with pro-

priety on the subject, is, first, that I endeavoured, as well as I could, to appreciate the value of each picture by its approach to nature; or it's conformity to the rules of art — and, secondly, that I well know, connoisseurs are often guided by prejudices. A master may be famous for some particular mode of colouring, to the neglect of every thing else — or he may be famous for drawing — or for the scarcity of his pictures — or perhaps he may be a fashionable painter. From the influence of all these things, it often happens, that pictures may be considered as possessing more merit, than they really have.

After all, however these pictures might have been valued (as they ought) not according to their *real merit*; but according to their *saleable qualities*; and if so, I may have only to oppose the tricks and artifices of a few picture-dealers; not the settled judgment of any distinguished lovers of the art.

	£.
Horse's head, by Vandyck	- - 50
Battle, by Julio Romano	- - 150
Susannah, by Reubens	- - 80
Landscape, by Swanevelt	- - 30
Jupiter,	

		£.
Jupiter and Europa, after Guido	-	40
Galatea, by Zimeni	-	40
A Woverman	-	250
Venus, by Sacchi	-	80
Holy family. Da Reggio	-	70
Architecture, by Steenwych	-	80
A cook's shop, by Teniers	-	800
A cook's shop, by De Vos	-	200
Bacchanalian, by Reubens	-	250
Nativity, by Cignani	-	250
Sir Thomas Chaloner, by Vandyck	-	200
Sir Thomas Gresham, by Ant. More	-	40
Erasmus, by Holbein	-	40
A friar's head, by Reubens	-	40
Fr. Hall, by himself	-	40
School of Athens, by Le Brun	-	250
Rembrandt's wife, by Rembrandt	-	300
Reubens' wife, by Reubens	-	60
A head, by Salvator	-	40
Inigo Jones, by Vandyck	-	50
Two ruins, by Viviano	-	40
Daughters of lord Wharton, by Vandyck	-	200
Judgment of Paris, and sleeping Bac-		
chus, by Jordano	-	500
Charles I. and his queen, by Vandyck	-	400
Lord Wharton, by Vandyck	-	200
Lord Wandesford, by Vandyck	-	150
	F 3	Lady

		£.
Lady Wharton, by Vandyck	-	100
Jane Wenman, by Vandyck	-	100
Christ's baptism, by Albano	-	700
St. Stephen, by Le Sœur	-	500
Holy family, by Vandyck	-	1600
Magdalen, by Reubens	-	1600
Holy family, by Cantarini	-	300
Holy family, by Titian	-	100
Simeon, by Guido	-	150
Virgin, by Aug. Caracci	-	200
Titian's son, and nurse, by Titian	-	100
Holy family, by Sarto	-	250
Affumption, by Morillio	-	700
Adoration, by Morillio	-	600
Cyclops, by Jordano	-	200
Dædalus, by Le Brun	-	150
Clement IX., by Carl. Maratt	-	250
Galatea, and it's companion	-	500
Holy family, by Carl. Maratt	-	80
Virgin and Jesus, by C. Maratt	-	200
St. Cæcilia, by C. Maratt	-	260
Affumption, by C. Maratt	-	100
Virgin and Joseph, by C. Maratt	-	150
St. Catharine's marriage, by C. Maratt		100
Virgin in the clouds, by C. Maratt		60
St. John, by C. Maratt	-	60
Venus and Cupid, by C. Maratt	-	150
		Holy

		£.
Holy family, by Beretoni	- - -	200
Affumption, by Beretoni	- - -	80
Pool of Bethesda — Christ on the mount — Apollo, and Daphne — Bacchus, and Ariadne, by Chiari	- - - - -	450
Apollo — Diana, by Rosalba	- -	80
Drawing of a head, by Raphael	- -	100
St. Catharine, by Guido	- -	20
Birth of the Virgin, and presentation, by Jordano	- - - - -	60
Flight into Egypt, by Morillio	- -	300
Crucifixion, by Morillio	- -	150
Hercules, and Omphale, by Romanelli	-	100
Holy family, by Poussin	- - -	800
Reubens' wife, by Vandyck	- - -	600
Reubens' family, by Jord. of Ant- werp	- - - - -	400
Winter, by Giacomo Baffan	- - -	100
Summer, by Leonardo Baffan	- - -	100
Boors, by Teniers	- - -	150
Christ appearing to Mary, by P. Cor- tona	- - - - -	200
Judgment of Paris; and of Midas, by Scavoni	- - - - -	60
Christ intombed, by Parmigiano	- - -	150
F 4		Adoration

		£.
Adoration of the Magi, by V. Breughel		100
Virgin and child, by Barocchio	-	50
Venus, by A. Caracci	- - -	70
Head, by Dobson	- - -	25
St. John, by C. Dolci	- - -	70
Innocent X. by Velasco	- - -	60
Boy's head, by Luti	- - -	20
Friars, and it's companion, by J. Miol		120
Dying officer, by Bourgognione	-	100
It's companion	- - - -	50
Boors, by Teniers	- - - -	50
Boors, by Ostade	- - - -	30
Christ in the sepulchre, by Giacomo Baffan	- - - -	40
Holy family, by Wiliberts	- -	40
Holy family, by Rottenhammer	- -	40
Virgin and Child, by Alex. Veronese		40
Soldiers, by S. Rosa	- - -	50
Virgin, by Morillio	- - -	80
Virgin, by Seb. Concha	- -	20
Edward VI. by Holbein	- - -	100
Laban, by Sebas. Bourdun	- -	200
Banqueting-house ceiling, by Reubens		100
Six sketches, by Reubens	- -	600
Bathsheba, by Venderwerffe	- -	700
Two flower-pieces, by V. Huysum	-	1200
Christ		

		£.
Christ and Mary, by Phil. Laura	-	100
Holy family, by Bellino	-	60
Two landscapes, by Bourgognione	-	100
Two landscapes, by Gasp. Poussin	-	40
Holy family, by Ponzoni	-	160
Death of the Innocents, by Seb. Bourdon	-	400
Death of Joseph, by Velasco	-	200
St. Christopher, by Elsheimer	-	50
Lord Danby, by Vandyck	-	200
Two pictures of the Ascension, by P. Veronefe	-	200
Doctors of the church, by Guido	-	3500
Prodigal, by S. Rosa	-	700
Meleager, by Reubens	-	300
Four markets, by Snyders	-	1000
Curtius, and Cocles, by Mola, together		800
Lions, by Reubens	-	100
Architecture, by Polidore, or J. Romano	-	300
Two old women's heads, by Reubens, and Boll	-	200
Cupid, by Eliz. Sirani	-	60
Holy family, by Procacino	-	250
Ufurer, by Q. Matsis	-	200
Job's friends, by Guido	-	200
		Europa,

		£.
Europa, by P. Brill, and Africa	-	300
Dives and Lazarus, by P. Veronese		100
Exposition of Cyrus, and its companion, by Castiglione	- -	300
Adoration, by Old Palma	- -	250
Holy family, by Old Palma	- -	200
Moon-light, by Reubens	- -	300
Nymph and Shepherd, by Car. Cignani		200
Emblematic picture, by Bourdon	-	200
Abraham, and Hagar, by P. Cortona		1000
Abraham, and Isaac, by Rembrandt	-	250
Old man, and his sons, by S. Rosa	-	250
Adoration of the Shepherds, by Guido		400
Continence of Scipio, by Poussin	-	600
Moses striking the rock, by Poussin		900
Intombing Christ, by L. Caracci	-	300
The infant Moses, by Le Sœur	-	150
Adoration of the Magi, by C. Maratt		300
Cattle, by Teniers	- - -	150
Landscape, by G. Poussin	- -	100
Last supper, by Raphael	- -	500
Solomon's idolatry, by Stella	-	250
Two landscapes, by C. Lorain	-	1200
Two landscapes, by G. Poussin	-	250
Joconda, mistress to Francis I.	-	100
Apollo, by Cartarini	- - -	50
		Holy

		£.
Holy family, by Castelli	-	200
Ganymede, by M. Ang. Buon. :	-	100
Virgin and Child, by Dominic :	-	100
Salutation, by Albani	- -	200
		<hr/>
		<b>£40,555</b>
		<hr/>



## S E C T. IX.

FROM Houghton we proceeded to *Holkam*, over furzy downs, and beautiful sheep-walks; on which great numbers of sheep were grazing in separate flocks, and gave some life to a country, otherwise but uninteresting.

At Stower, the road enters sandy lanes, with neat clipped-hedges; but barren of wood. As we approach the sea, the ground rises in several parts.

Holkam stands on an easy eminence. A beautiful piece of water is the first object, that strikes the eye; and an island, well-wooded, gives it variety. The front of the house is elegant; tho perhaps too much broken.— This was however all we could see; for tho we had, with some inconvenience, accommodated ourselves to the day, on which alone we were informed,

informed, the house was to be seen ; yet when we arrived on the spot, we found a new difficulty. It seems the perquisites for shewing it are assigned to an old house-keeper, and as she happened to be out of the way, no entrance could be obtained.

From *Holkam* we pursued the road to *Wells* ; and came upon a sea-coast diversified with a small winding river — a village — a harbour — and a grove — all good objects ; yet they are so separated, and detached, that they no where appeared to advantage.

*Wells* is a disagreeable dirty fishing-town. A little beyond it, *Stiffkey* appears from the higher grounds, pleasantly seated on a rivulet, in a hollow, decorated with trees ; and adorned with ruins. On a nearer approach, the ruins have a good effect.

From *Stiffkey* the road passes through pleasant lanes, and leaving *Cley* on the left, leads to *Holt* ; a clean, neat village. In our way we proposed to take *Wolterton* and *Blicklin*, the seats

seats of Lord Walpole, and the Earl of Buckingham.

Lord Walpole's contains nothing very interesting. A collection of chalky portraits, I know not by whom, of the late royal family, adorn the best rooms ; together with a family-picture, well composed ; but in the same style of colouring. —— In the *state-room* hang two pieces of dead game over the doors. The composition and light in both are good. That with the waterfall is the best.

From Wolterton the road continues, through pleasant lanes, to *Blicklin*. The approach opens with noble views of meadow-lawns, and ancient woods, which speak the antiquity of the place. The weather however permitted us not to walk much abroad. The house is one of those mansions, which carry us into the times of our fore-fathers. The moat, the bridges, the turrets, the battlements are all impressed with the ideas of antiquity. A tale of woe also contributes to dignify this mansion. It was the birth-place of the unfortunate Ann Bolen. —— *Blicklin* is now very expensively fitted up, and contains many grand rooms, in which

which the chimnies, ceilings, wainscot and other ornaments are in general suitable to the antiquity of the whole. Yet some of the rooms were hung with Indian paper ; which is gawdy, and disagreeable any where ; but is particularly unsuitable to a venerable old mansion. — In the study hangs a good full-length of sir John Maynard by Lely. — The most remarkable appendage of the house, is a library collected by sir Richard Ellis, which is esteemed the best private collection in England. The room in which it is contained, is a gallery of a hundred and twenty two feet, by twenty two. The ceiling is an old rich stucco. The whole room, and all it's furniture is noble. — The stair-case is grand, and beautiful. It is modern ; but has all the appearance of antiquity. The first flight fronts the great door of the hall ; the next flight divides ; and a union is again formed in a gallery.





## S E C T. X.

**F**ROM *Blicklin* the road still continues through lanes, broad, noble, and picturesquely marked with a variety of winding wheel-tracks ; and planted with lofty oak. The country around is rather flat. At a distance, here and there, appears a tower. We nowhere saw better-built churches, than in Norfolk.

About seven miles before we reach Norwich, a pleasing scene is presented. An extensive flat common is formed into an amphitheatre by a rich edging of wood. Here and there, groups, and single trees, advancing, bring the woods loosely into the plain.

Other scenes succeed, which are not disagreeable, formed by Mr. Masham's woods ; and these are contrasted by patches of wild heath,

ornamented by *distant* woods, and two or three *hazy* towers.

But the heaths soon prevail ; and become both foreground, and distance without any variety. The road leads between the bare mounds of new-inclosed commons ; nor does the eye find any thing to rest on, till within a mile of Norwich. At that distance a grand view presents itself of the town, lying on a gentle declivity, stretching over a large compass of ground ; and adorned with several towers, and spires. The whole is crowned with a massy square building, which we found afterwards to be the castle, appearing in the distance to stand on a hill, in the middle of the town. It is a magnificent ruin, but too regular. On entering the suburbs, the eye loses it : but the entrance into the yard of the King's-head inn presents it again in great beauty. You see it through the arched gate-way, which throws it into good perspective \*.

Norwich is a large town, at least three miles in circumference. The river Yar (sometimes called the Wanfum) runs a mile along

\* I believe a house is now built, which intercepts the view.

the





the eastern side of it, and defends it like a ditch. The other parts are surrounded by a wall. It is a well-built, agreeable town. You see order in every part. The great church is a Saxon pile; but good architecture of the kind. The cloisters are very noble. The castle-hill affords a rich, tho not a picturesque view; and the bridge over the castle-ditch, with all it's appendages, would make a grand picture. The Yar from Norwich (to which it is navigable for large barges) pursues a winding course to Yarmouth, where it forms the peninsula, on which that town stands, and where it makes one of the best natural harbours in England.

From Norwich we set out for Ipswich. The road leads through lanes; and the country is well wooded. Tho flat, it is not unpleasant, as far as we could judge from seeing it through a drizzling rain.

Near Scole we crossed the Waveny; which divides Norfolk from Suffolk. This river, after running fifty miles towards the sea in an eastern direction, and approaching it's very

shores, is opposed by a rising ground, which gives it an abrupt direction almost due north, This leads it to the river Yar; and tho it's waters are sufficient to give name to a harbour of it's own, it merely assists as a secondary river, in deepening, and enlarging the harbour of Yarmouth. The meadows lying along the banks of the Waveny, (which passes through them with an even, gentle course) are supposed to be among the richest in England. Here besides the cattle of the country, numerous herds of starved cattle from the highlands of Scotland, find their way. Of such pasturage they had no idea. Here they lick up grass by mouthfulls: the only contention is, which of them can eat the most, and grow fat the soonest. When they have gotten smooth coats, and swagging sides, they continue their journey to the capital, and present themselves in Smith-field, where they find many admirers.

About eight miles before we reach Ipswich, the country assumes a more variegated face. The village of Stoneham, which stands high, encompassed with wood, makes a picturesque appearance from the opposite hill.

The

The country still improves as we approach Ipswich, but chiefly in near views. Pleasing woody scenes open first on one hand; and then on the other: villas and villages adorn the landscape on every side; and here and there, a beautiful distance opens, which was now become a novelty.

About the seventh stone Mr. Bacon's at Codenham, affords a scene of noble oaks rising on the left, a little above the road. His house just opens, and shuts, among the trees, as we glide past.

Ipswich is a large, incumbered, unpleasent place. The market-house is an old rotunda, supported by wooden pillars, with a figure of justice on the top. The form is not unpleasing.

On leaving Ipswich we took the Colchester-road, through sandy, heavy lanes. The country is like what we had left; but in a less picturesque style of landscape. About six miles from Ipswich the lanes open upon a woody scene, which looks like the skirts of some vast forest.

This scenery being removed, the road is adorned with two or three beautiful dips, on

the left, interspersed with cottages, and a variety of fine wood. Beyond these is a good distance. Soon after the tower of Dedham-church makes a picturesque appearance.

Having presented us with these views, the road suddenly shuts in all objects ; dives into a shady bottom ; and carries us into Stratford St. Mary's ; which is the last town in Suffolk.

The cattle, through all this country, are a beautiful breed of cream-coloured beasts, without horns.

## S E C T. XI.

ON entering Essex, the road is more than pleasant. It leads through woody lanes; which grow still more beautiful, as we approach Colchester. Ardley-woods, which in a manner surrounded us, afforded every where the most pleasing sylvan scenes — sometimes retiring to a distance — sometimes advancing — now incircling a common with it's cottages; and forming a back-ground behind them — then closing up the whole road, so as to leave the eye at a loss, where it could break out. Nor were these effects produced by copse-wood, or paltry trees; but by noble oaks, and elms; many of which, even single, had dignity enough to grace a scene.

As this scenery removed, Colchester appeared at a mile's distance, stretching along the declivity of a hill. We circled the town;

and had a fine winding view of it, as we approached ; entering it by St. Leonard's, where it makes a picturesque appearance. The castle is a square, heavy building, like many we had seen ; but the ruins of St. Botolph's, in the middle of the town, are beautiful.

As we left Colchester, on the opposite side, our delightful scenery vanished : and the road led through garden-grounds ; low cut hedges ; and a naked country.

About the forty-ninth stone, we enter a flat common, where Cromwell's army sat down to besiege Colchester. His intrenchments still make a formidable figure on the heath. The defence of this place was among the most soldierly actions of the war ; and the surrender of it among the most deplorable. No scene of the highest finished tragedy can go beyond those strokes of nature, which the noble historian of the times has given us in describing the execution of those gallant officers, sir Charles Lucas, and sir George Lisle. The former, tho' of morose conversation, was *in the day of battle a gallant*





*lant man to look upon, and follow: the latter, to the fierceness of his courage added the softest and most gentle nature — was kind to all — beloved of all, and without a capacity to make an enemy.* Sir Charles fell first; on which sir George stooping down, embraced him. He then stood up; and turning to the file of musketeers, who stood ready with their presented arms, desired them to step a little nearer. I'll warant you, sir, said one of them, we'll hit you. "My friends, said sir George smiling, I have been nearer you, when you have missed me." — The story is told at length in lord Clarendon with many affecting circumstances.

About five miles from Colchester, the woods meet us again, on the right; but keep at too great a distance. The lanes still continue beautiful; tho adorned only with pollards.

At the forty-third stone we had a grand distance, composed of a noble continuation of woods, belonging to lord Grimston; which (after we had passed Kelveden, a sweet village,) are taken up by Mr. Ducane's woods, and

continue as far as Witham, a pleasant, airy, clean town.

From hence to Chelmsford we had pleasant lanes. The country is flat, and woody. About the thirty-second stone, lord Waltham's woods begin to make a fine appearance on the right; and are answered by another range on the left. The former soon advance to the road, forming by degrees an avenue, a mile long. The woods, on the other side, retire, and become the boundary to a noble bay of flat rich country.

Lord Waltham's house, to which the avenue leads, was once a royal mansion; and afterwards belonged to general Monk. We did not see it; but from the tradition of the country, it has once been a vast edifice. The kitchen contained six large fire ranges; each range occupying fifteen feet. In the centre was a bull ring. The bull was first baited in the kitchen, and afterwards roasted whole. Upon the landing of the great stair-case, a coach, and six might have turned. The hall, which is the only part of this prodigious pile now remaining, is sixty feet high.

Chelmsford appears to advantage, as we approach it. The tower of the church is itself a good object; and is seen to advantage by the rich country, which is spread behind it. From hence the road affords little variety. Near the twenty-ninth stone, a bridge and other circumstances might be improved into a good view; and between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth stones, the road rises beautifully, as if it entered a wood. Ingatston-tower, surrounded with wood, is a good object, as we approach the town.

Between Ingatston and Burntwood, we turned a little to the left, to see lord Petre's new house; which presents a scene of great magnificence. It's situation, and extensive view — the woods around it — and the form of the building, are all in the grandest style. The house itself is not a pleasing object. Neither front is elegant; and the little windows in the principal one, are much the reverse. When you enter it, the lowness of the hall hurts the eye. The apartments indeed

indeed are magnificent; and to this every thing seems to have been sacrificed. Even the stair-case is such only as belongs to a private house. The true style of architecture unites beauty, convenience, and grandeur, (where necessary,) both in the parts, and in the whole. On this journey, we had seen a noble instance of this union in Wansted-house.

Burntwood is an agreeable, clean, thorough-fare village.

From Thurdon-hill, near this place, as we emerged from a dark lane, (which is among the best modes of exhibiting a distance,) is displayed a very grand view of the Thames, winding through, what appears to be, a vast vale, bounded, on one side, by the high grounds, on which we stood, and on the other by the Kentish hills. No part of England\* affords a grander specimen of this mode of scenery. Rivers, and vales we often see: but such a river as the Thames, winding through such countries as Kent, and Essex, is a sight we seldom meet with.

\* See Observations on the southern coasts of England, p. 79.

To the grandeur of this river-view we may add the scene of navigation, which it continually displays.

Our stage to Rumford was a little varied with rising grounds: but the environs of London began now to break in upon us; and every rural idea was totally lost.



OBSERVATIONS  
ON SEVERAL PARTS OF  
*NORTH WALES*;  
RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO  
PICTURESQUE BEAUTY;  
MADE  
IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1773.



## S E C T. I.

**B**USINESS carried us first to Manchester ; from whence we set out for Chester.

The country as far as Alteringham, is flat, and woody. Dunham-hall, a seat of the earl of Stamford's, stands in a park which contains some of the stateliest timber in the country. Here the hern, a great admirer of lofty trees, has made a numerous settlement. The woods crowd up to the roads ; and as you ride past, you just get a catch of the house, through two or three old-fashioned openings. From hence the road leads along pleasant lanes, in view of two or three large pieces of water ; and passes close by Tabley, a handsome house, belonging to Sir John Leicester.

Northwich was our next stage. Near this town is shewn one of the greatest curiosities in England. In novels we often read of in-

chanted castles. Here is seen, what may well be called, an enchanted cathedral. The road to it indeed is not the most convenient. You are let down in a basket, through an opening in the earth, at least a hundred and fifty feet. But this gives it only a more romantic air. When you arrive at the bottom, you find yourself in a most magnificent structure. For what purpose designed, or by what art of man contrived, and thus erected in the bowels of the earth, you are at a loss to conceive. The largest cathedral compared to it, is a mole-hill near a mountain. It's arched roof is formed of splendid crystal ; and is supported by innumerable rows of pillars composed of the same rich materials. The pavement glitters like glass. Windows it can have none, so deep below the surface. But windows are unnecessary : it is illumined with various lights hung up among the pillars, which being reflected from bright surfaces in every direction, are multiplied into thousands. One may almost speak of them in the language of poetry :

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From the arched roof,  
Pendent by subtil magic, many a row  
Of starry lamps, and blazing crescents, fed  
With naptha, and asphaltus, yielded light  
As from a sky.

In

In some parts of this superb edifice, the ornaments appear to be Gothic ; in others, Grecian : but as you examine it nicely, you find it cannot exactly be reduced to the rules of any order. In short, it appears to be an amazing piece of perspective, constructed in a mode of architecture wholly its own. I am sorry to descend from these lofty ideas by adding, that I have only been describing the salt-pits at Northwich. And yet I have no doubt, but if any one, *unacquainted* with them, should be let down in his sleep, and left to *awake at his leisure*, he would find this description fall short of the first idea that would strike him.

Soon after we leave Northwich, we enter Delamere-forest, which, tho a wild, heathy, country, affords the ground-plot of a noble scene. The parts are large, with many considerable hills, and smaller inequalities. The intersections also among them, are often pleasing. If the whole were woody, as it once probably was, it might afford many beautiful forest-views — roads winding through woods ; and lawns interspersed with groves, or bounded by the dark recesses of the forest ; the wild

deer every where starting from the brakes, bounding along the plains, grazing in herds, or reposing in groups. If our ancestors smarted under forest-laws, they had at least the compensation of beautiful landscape.

Delamere-forest is a gentle rise through the space of six, or seven miles. Yet gentle as it is, continued through so long a tract, the ascent becomes considerable; and when we approach the end of the forest, we find ourselves mounted on a vast terrace, from whence the eye is carried far, and wide, over a flat country, bounded by the Welsh mountains, under which appear in remote distance, the windings of the Dee, and the towers of Chester. In the middle space stands Beeston-castle, seated proudly on the brow of a hill. It's situation is one of the most impregnable in England. The hill is steep and rocky; opposing all access, but by a single path on the east. Our views of it from the heights of Delamere, shewed it in a more connected, and picturesque form, than when it appears insulated, as it does on a nearer approach. The castle itself, which was built about the year 1200, was equal in strength to the situation it occupies. It was supplied with water by a well, which seems to





to have been a work of astonishing labour ; having been hewn through at least a hundred yards of solid rock. The castle, tho now in ruins, was strong enough, so late in history as the last civil wars, to undergo two vigorous sieges. It held for the king. The parliament-troops assaulted it during four months ; when they were beaten off by prince Rupert. In the following year it suffered a longer siege, and was at length reduced. Ruined however as it now is, the country-people in it's neighbourhood rest still on a prophecy, that in some future time, Beeston-castle shall be restored, and contribute to save all England. I should add, that some of it's ruins are very picturesque ; especially the grand entrance.

As we approach Chester, the winding of the Dee has a good effect. Ancient towns, like this, are among the noblest records of history. The Romans first distinguished Chester as a military station. Here was posted the legion sur-named *victrix*; of which the spade discovers many remains — votive altars, and bricks inscribed with it's name and title. In after ages, king Edgar made it a seat of royal residence. Here

he triumphed over all his enemies, sailing up the Dee in state, (so says the history of the times,) rowed by eight tributary kings. Some writers seat the king of Scotland among his bargemen: but the Scotch historians have taken great pains to repel the scandal. After the time of William I. Chester continued still a place of great consequence. The earls of Chester were potent princes, and even convened parliaments.

In the map, Chester appears to be well-seated for trade; standing at the head of that grand estuary formed by the Dee: but the mouth of that river is choked by dangerous sand-banks. For the rest, Chester is a gloomy, incumbered town. The castle is an immense cluster of buildings; but loses its picturesque grandeur by being broken into parts. Our best amusement was a walk on the walls, which command a great variety of beautiful views.

## S E C T. II.

**T**HE entrance into Wales from Chester, presented us with a long stretch of flat country. The distance still bounded by the Welch mountains, is a portion of that vast landscape, which was spread before the eye from the heights of Delamere.

Leaving on the right, the ruins of Harden-castle, bosomed in wood ; and soon after leaving behind us the whole flat country, we ascended the higher grounds, which rose gradually to the mountains. These dreary wastes, totally unadorned with any of the beautiful appendages of landscape, led us to the town of Mold.

Here we were shewn a spot of elevated ground, once occupied by a castle of great prowess. Under it's ruins lie buried the bones of many a Dane, and Briton, who fell beneath it's walls, during a siege, which it long maintained.

tained. The siege of Mold is mentioned by the Welsh historians, among the most splendid actions of their annals. The bards of the day, made it little inferior to the siege of Troy. But all its heroical monuments are now lost, together with the names of the heroes, and their gallant achievements. The *towers* of the castle, and its very *foundations* are all blended together ; and nothing remains of this celebrated object of contention, but a few heaps of earth. The mere site of the castle is all, that can be traced.

We build with what we deem eternal rock ;  
 A distant age asks, where the fabric stood ?  
 While in the dust, sifted, and searched in vain,  
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

From Mold the country becomes still wilder. The heights rise into mountains ; smooth indeed, and rarely decorated with rock ; but steep, and lofty. Some of them we traversed ; dipping, at intervals, into little fertile vallies, and mounting again the opposite hills, till at length we came to the heights of Penbarris ; from the brow of which, we had a view into the beautiful and extensive vale of Cluyd.

Down

Down the formidable steep of this mountain we descended rapidly into the town of Ruthin, which stands at the bottom of it, and about the middle of the vale.

Every little town in Wales boasts its antiquities. At Mold we found the *site* of a castle. Here we found the *ruins* of one. Ruthin-castle was the ancient defence of the avenues into the vale of Cluyd, in this part. It's situation is curious. It stands on a rising ground, in a dish of mountains ; and if it had ever been in the hands of any chieftain, who had taste in landscape, it might easily, with a little planting on the fore-ground, have been made beautiful, without loss either of strength or dignity.

The vale of Cluyd, which we had now entered, is deservedly celebrated by all travellers. It is chiefly indeed considered as a rich scene of cultivation ; but it abounds also with picturesque beauty. It is very extensive ; not less than twenty-four miles in length ; and six, seven, and sometimes eight, in breadth ; and is almost every where skreened by lofty mountains, which are commonly ploughed at the bottom,

bottom, and pastured at the top, as is common in all rough countries. It was the practice in Virgil's time :

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Serunt, & vomere duras  
Exercent colles ; atq. horum asperrima pascunt.

Within these bold limits the vale forms one large segment of a circle, varied only in different parts by little mountain-recesses, which break the regularity of the sweep. The area of this grand scene is in some parts open, and extended, affording the most amusing distances : in other parts, it is full of little knolls, and hillocks, and thickly planted with wood. The great want it sustains, is that of water. Many little rivulets find their way through it ; particularly the Cluyd, from whence it takes it's name ; but none of them is in any degree equivalent to the scene. The Cluid itself is but a diminutive stream. At one end indeed the vale wants no decoration of this kind, as it opens to the sea. The other end is lost in mountains. About Ruthin the scene is woody ; and continues so, near six miles farther, till we reach Denbigh. Here the view becomes more extensive, and opens towards St. Asaph, upon a wide and spacious flat called





Rhyddland-marsh, from a castle of that name, which formerly guarded its confines.

As we approach Denbigh, it's castle, seated on the lofty summit of an inclined plane, makes a noble appearance. The hill, on which it stands, is a limestone-rock, and is the more remarkable, as we observed no other rock in the vale.

The castle, which is about a mile in circumference, is broken into so many parts, that, on the spot, no good view can be obtained of the whole together. But many of the parts are beautiful in themselves; particularly the gate of the inner-castle, which is a noble fragment.

The best appearance which the castle of Denbigh makes altogether, is from the *parks*. The ruins there, are picturesque, descending the rock, from the inner-castle, which is the highest part, to the well-tower, which is the lowest. This latter work takes its name from defending a well, at the bottom of the rock, which supplied the garrison with water. Lambert, who came before this castle, in the civil war, found every part so inaccessible, that he began

began to fear the event ; till he was fortunate enough to sap the well-tower, on which the garrison surrendered.

In the castle of Denbigh is a singular ruin, the original intention of which is not very apparent. It is most like a church ; and yet unlike any structure of that kind in use. It consists only of one single area. Nothing remains, but walls ; in which are nine windows on each side. The length of the building is fifty-seven paces ; and the breadth twenty-five. At the east end a good distance opens along the vale, towards St. Asaph.

Denbigh is an inconsiderable town ; but the country around it is beautiful, and various. Among the hills are sequestered scenes ; while the vale furnishes open views, with distances ; and a sea-coast is hard at hand.

The woody scenes of Gwaynynog, the seat of Col. Myddeilton, about two miles from Denbigh, are worth visiting. Gwaynynog stands in the middle of a pleasant park : but the beauty of the place is a valley winding behind the house.

The

The pleasing irregularity of this sweet recess, — the several glades into which it opens ; and the sequestered scenes with which these glades are often closed — the river, proportioned to the valley — the side-screens variously adorned with wood ; and the path judiciously conducted through the whole, are all very beautiful. From the higher grounds the castle of Denbigh makes a good object.

Lleweny, the seat of Sir Lynch Cotton, lies about two miles on the other side of Denbigh ; and in a situation very different from that of Gwaynynog. Col. Myddelton's stands on the edge of the vale ; and has the advantage of the sinuous parts of one of the hills, which compose it. Lleweny, with a screen of wood behind it, lies at the bottom of the vale, and has a large portion of it in prospect, of which Denbigh-castle is the grand feature \*.

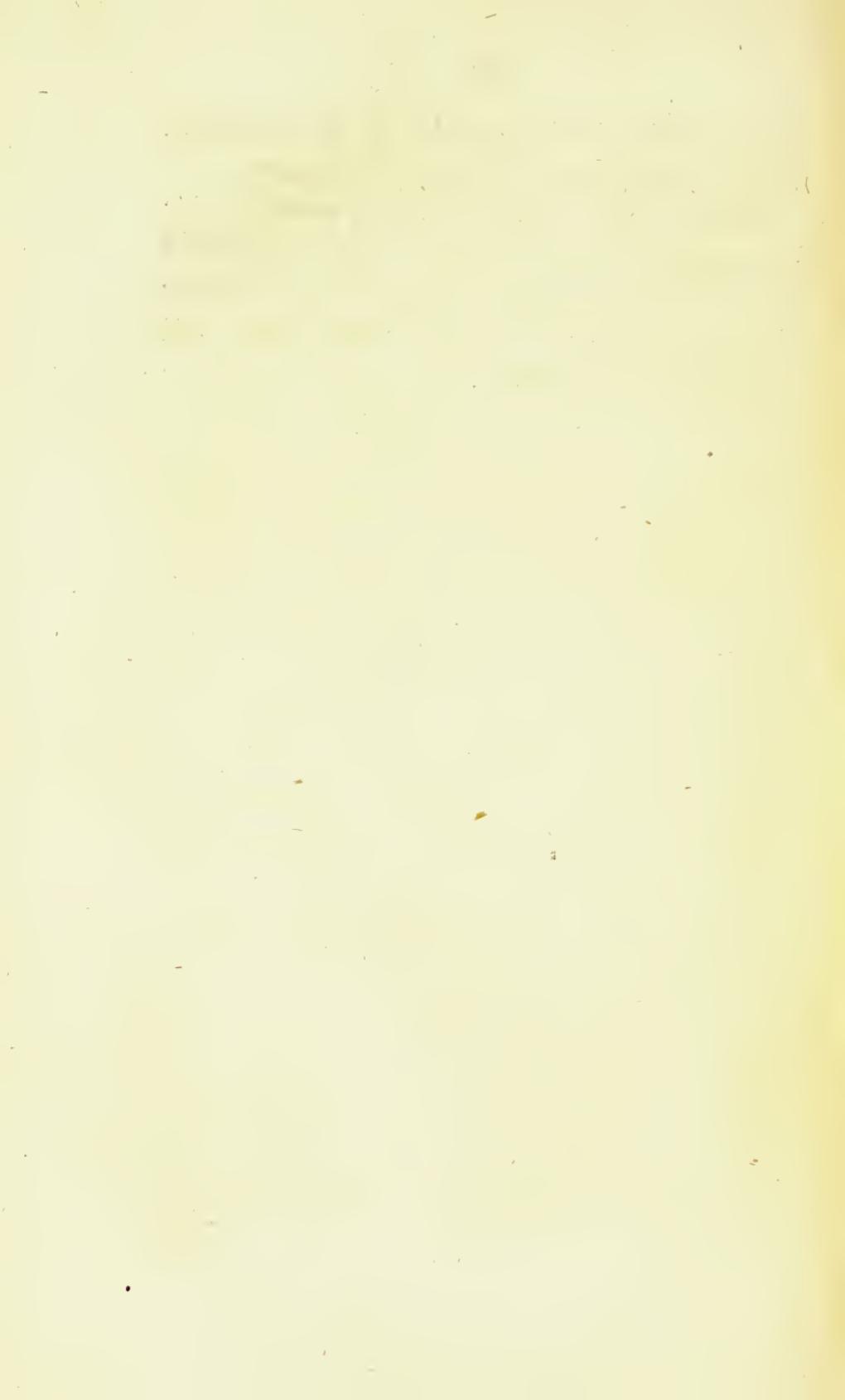
\* Lleweny was afterwards purchased by Mr. Fitzmorris, brother to the earl of Shelburn, who added a number of buildings to it, and turned it into a bleaching-house. Here he lived with the affected humility of a tradesman, and the pomp of a lord. It is said, he used to travel in his coach and six to Chester, and then sell his cloth behind a counter.

But

But of all the beautiful scenes in this neighbourhood, the valley of Cyffredin pleased us most. It lies about five miles west of Denbigh, upon the banks of the Elway; which is a considerable river. The high grounds, which lead into it, form also the screen of another valley, which unites with Cyffredin. This valley too is adorned with it's stream, (tho much inferior to the Elway,) and with a variety of wood, and lawn. A little bridge, at the bottom, was a point, from which we had a view of both vallies at once. But the views from the bridge itself, both above and below, solicited most of our attention. That part of this beautiful valley, which winds down the Elway, is formed by a lofty screen of rock on the left, in which the principal feature is a cave; and by a high woody bank on the right; but the river taking a short turn, this part of the valley soon winds out of sight. The other part, which runs up the stream, continues at least a mile before the eye: both it's screens are woody, but are not so lofty as those below the bridge. From hence we still pursued our rout up the Elway, as far as Pont-newith; where

where another bridge afforded us very beautiful views ; both below, and above the stream.

Having spent a long morning among these picturesque scenes, we left them, convinced that if our time had permitted us to follow the river farther, we should have been well rewarded for our labour.



## S E C T. III.

**F**ROM Denbigh, we set out for Conway, the isle of Anglesea, and the country about Snowdon.

Our ride was barren, till we came to Pontralcoch. Here we again met the Elway ; the banks of which had given us so much entertainment at Cyffredin. At Pontralcoch we found a grand single arch thrown over the river. It stands in the midst of a spacious amphitheatre of woody hills ; which form a scene corresponding with it in dignity.

We found other pleasing views, while we continued in the neighbourhood of the Elway ; particularly (if I mistake not the name,) at Plâſcoch ; where the river dividing into several channels forms a little plain into two or three woody islands ; which opening, and intercepting the view by turns, through the trees, made an agreeable shifting scene. This indeed is a

mere miniature: but when the scale is larger, and the materials of more consequence, and well put together, we sometimes see beautiful scenery in this species of landscape. Not far from hence, the Elway joins the Cluyd; and tho it is a stream of much superior value; yet the Cluyd taking a dignity of character from the grandeur of the vale, which it divides, carries the waters of the Elway, under it's own name, into the sea.

As we approach the end of the vale of Cluyd, we see the last hills, which compose it's screens; particularly those on the right, sinking into the extended plain of Rhyddland-marsh. This vast surface was varied with different tints melting into each other; but few objects appeared upon it, which had any distinct form. The tower of St. Asaph was almost singly conspicuous; and a little to the left, the castle of Rhyddland. The marsh spread far and wide in every direction; and beyond all appeared the sea.

As we arrived nearer the close of the vale, the tower of St. Asaph, and Rhyddland-castle took each a higher stand, and formed an agreeable combination with a bridge, which consisted of several arches, and appeared as a second





second distance. The fore-ground was composed of the Elway, and it's banks.

Our rout did not lead us into St. Asaph ; which offered no temptation to carry us out of our way. It is an inconsiderable place.

Here we forsook the vale of Cluyd, and turning to the left, along the great Irish road, we mounted higher grounds. From hence we had a still more extensive view over Rhyddland-marsh ; which on one side is bounded by mountains ; on the other by the sea. So vast a flat made a good distance, and had it's effect, as we travelled among the woods of a lofty bank, which was every where rough and broken, and made an excellent contrast, as well as a fore-ground. The species of landscape we had before us, is not unlike that described at Cotefwold in Gloucestershire, from Crickly-hill \* : only from that stand was presented a rich scene — the vale of Severn ; and here our distance consisted of a bleak marsh. The marsh, no doubt, composed a less amusing mode of distance than the vale ; yet when well inlightened, it was not deficient

\* See Observat. on the Wye, p. 7.

in beauty ; and being more simple in it's composition, was grander in it's design.

As we left the confines of Rhyddland-marsh, the sea having now full scope, flowed up to the very base of the high grounds, on which we still travelled ; and formed them into promontories ; some of which were formidable.

" Around yon cliff, (said a peasant answering some of our inquiries,) runs a narrow road. It will save you two miles riding. The people of the country commonly use it ; but in many places it is fallen in ; and is rather dangerous." Dangerous indeed it appeared to be. It was a mere shelf, winding round a frightful precipice, and hanging over the sea. It looked like the path of despair. As we surveyed the opening of it into the great road, where we stood, a fellow, who had just passed it, (as if to add credit to the information, we had received,) presented himself on horse-back, between two panniers, singing a Welsh ballad, and driving a cow before him. Habit moulds us all. It is not the road, that is in itself frightful ; for then the peasant would have been as much terrified as we were. It is the imagination that takes the alarm. Quiet the imagination by a little habit, and the road

becomes easy. — The name of this place was Penmanbach.

Here we deserted the great road, and turning more towards the sea-coast, we viewed the shores as far as the promontory of Llandidno. We found a wild mountainous country ; two or three beautiful bays ; and here and there a good mountain scene ; but nothing, which greatly engaged our attention.

The promontory of Llandidno was famous in the days of our ancestors, for producing that species of hawk, called the *peregrine falcon*. This falcon is one of the *long-winged* kind ; among which he is the swiftest, the most courageous, and the most docile. His prey is commonly the hern, or some other bird that rises aloft in the air. The falcon mounts after him ; and endeavours to rise above him, which the swiftness of his wing enables him to do. When he has him thus at advantage, he strikes down upon him with his talons : and the falconer's amusement lies first in seeing the pursuer, and his prey, mount into the air, till they are lost as specks in the clouds ; and then in watching their descent. We had not the pleasure of seeing any of these *generous* birds, as they are called, between whose ancestors,

and ours, existed formerly so great an intimacy. We surveyed however their ancient castles, and the district around them; nor must I omit to add, what is generally mentioned both in the history of Llandidno, and of the falcon, that a letter is still extant from the Lord treasurer Burleigh, to one of the Mostyns, lords of this country, thanking him for a very fine cast of hawks from the rocks of Llandidno.





## S E C T. IV.

**F**R OM the desolate, but amusing coast of Llandidno, we pursued our way to Conway, through kindred scenes, wild, rough, and picturesque.

The castle of Conway, with the scenery about it, is supposed to afford one of the grandest views in Wales : and in some measure it deserves its reputation. As we stood opposite to it, at the Ferry-house, a noble bay, at least half a mile broad, lay before us, formed by the tide entering the river Conway. This bay winds into the country ; on the left, losing nothing of its dimensions, while it continues in sight. On the right it stretches to the sea : but the opening is so much closed by promontories, and reaches of low-land, that the idea of the sea is nearly excluded ; which is rather a circumstance of advantage. Had the sea appeared in its grandeur, the consequence of the bay had

been diminished. On the opposite side of the bay, on a knoll, which forms a sort of little peninsular promontory, stands the castle of Conway, fully equal in grandeur to the scene; and beyond the castle, rises a woody bank, as a back-ground; whose ample parts, and furniture correspond also with the objects around.

Here then are all the ingredients of a sublime, and beautiful landscape. — Water, rising ground, woody banks, and a castle, all of grand dimensions. And yet the picture is but an indifferent one. The case is, the composition is incorrect. The castle is formal, displaying a number of regular towers, and turrets; the bank beyond it, tho woody, is heavy, and lumpy; the lines have no variety, and there is still a nakedness about the whole, which is displeasing.

The best expedient to preferve truth in a view from the Ferry, and yet to add as much composition as the natural arrangement of the materials will allow, is to introduce only a part of the castle near the corner of the picture; which would ease it of some of it's regular towers; and to cut down part of the wood on the opposite bank, which would remove, in some degree, it's heaviness. As the wood, in fact,

fact, is periodically cut down, this liberty is very allowable. The picture might be improved also by planting a tree or two on the fore-ground; and hiding part of the regularity by their branches \*. As we approach the castle in the ferry-boat, the point of view of course frequently varies, and often for the better: but in *every* point there is a barrenness, and uniformity, which are displeasing.

The art of constructing castles in landscape, and of adapting landscape to castles, is rarely exemplified in the *living scene*. Some castles are more picturesque in their form, and situation than others; and some part almost of every castle may be picturesque. But with regard to the whole, we seldom see any castle, however meliorated by age, and improved by ruin, which can, in all respects, be called a complete model. — This castle certainly is not.

The picturesque advantages, which a castle, or any eminent building, receives from a *state of ruin*, are chiefly these.

\* See vol. i. p. 9. of the Forest-scenery, when withered trees are made use of for this purpose: but it may be answered by flourishing trees, if they are judiciously used, and proportioned to the use.

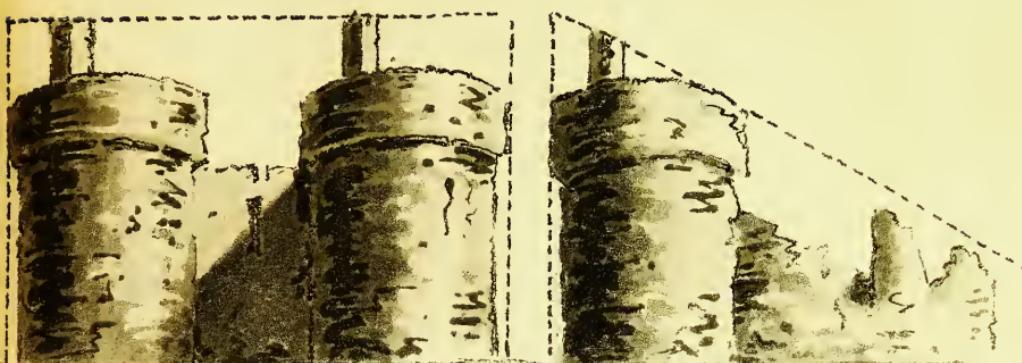
It gains irregularity in it's *general form*. We judge of beauty in castles, as we do in figures, in mountains, and other objects. The solid, square, heavy form, we dislike; and are pleased with the pyramidal one, which may be infinitely varied ; and which ruin contributes to vary.

Secondly, a pile gains from a state of ruin, an irregularity in it's *parts*. The cornice, the window, the arch, and battlement, which in their original form are all regular, receive from ruin a variety of little irregularities, which the eye examines with renewed delight.

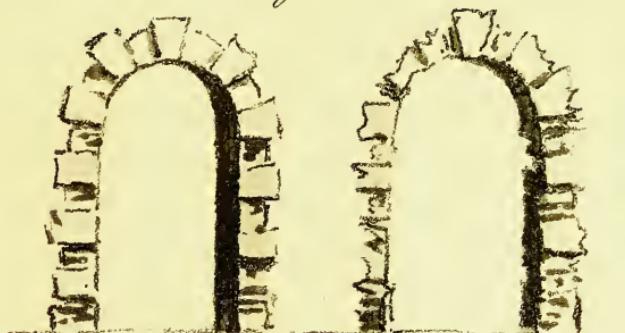
Lastly, a pile in a state of ruin receives the richest decorations from the various colours, which it acquires from time. It receives the stains of weather; the incrustations of moss; and the varied tints of flowering weeds. The Gothic window is hung with festoons of ivy; the arch with pendent wreaths streaming from each broken coigne; and the summit of the wall is planted with little twisting bushes, which fill up the square corners; and contribute still more to break the lines.

In these sources of beauty the castle of Conway is too deficient. It's parts indeed are shattered: but it is too intire to produce a good

*Ruin illustrated with regard to its general form.*



*— with regard to its parts.*



*— with regard to Decorations.*





good picturesque whole: and it is very little adorned with vegetable furniture.

As we got into the middle of the stream, in our approach to Conway, we had not only a varied view of the castle; but of the noble river we navigated. This stream, like a person, suddenly raised to a great fortune, increases at once from a spring to a river. The Conway runs only twenty-four miles; just the breadth of the two counties of Denbigh and Carnarvon, which it divides: and yet, tho' it's course is so short, it receives such vast increase from the various streams, which the surrounding mountains pour into it, that it is navigable almost to its fountain head. We regretted much that we could not navigate it as far as Llanrwst; where the woods, and rocks, and sweeping mountains, we were assured, were equal to any thing we could see in Wales; but our time would not permit us to see more of it than we could see from the ferry. In this river was formerly carried on a pearl-fishery, which is said to have been valuable. The pearls were found in large muscles. At present, no such business is followed. We saw indeed

indeed a number of people boiling muscles, on the banks of another river in the neighbourhood : but they were in quest only of those small pearls, which are sold to the apothecaries, for what they call *crab's eyes*.

Having crossed the ferry, we landed under the walls of the castle. Castles are commonly the appendages of towns : here the town seems a mere appendage to the castle. We were received at our inn, as we were at all the more considerable inns on the road, by a harper, who is commonly blind. His infirmity is probably the cause of his being appointed to the office of welcoming strangers into the town. These venerable substitutes of the ancient Cambrian bards, are often respectable figures. Their harps have an elegant form ; and if their music is not exquisite, their appearance is picturesque.





## S E C T. V.

THE retrospect through the gate, as we leave Conway, affords a pleasing view of ruin ; composed of battlements, and towers.

Here we met again the great Irish road ; and were conducted above a mile from the town, between walls, clumsily formed, of a very beautiful kind of marbled stone. I know not how far it is fitted for masonry ; but if it were properly disposed, it would give great richness to a building.

As we approach Penmanmawr, the country grows wilder ; and some of the heights tremendous. At Succinant the precipices of the road have rather a frightful appearance. From all these heights we see different parts of the sea-coast, at a distance ; — the promontorial parts of the country, with the islands by turns — Anglesea, Priest-holm, or Puffin's isle — great, and little Orm's head, (the former of which

which has the appearance of an island), and all the projecting lands in their neighbourhood. The little vallies, and recesses among the mountains, which we now traversed, were very beautiful. Abr, in particular, is a pleasant, woody recess, looking to the sea, and secured on every other side by lofty barriers.

At the distance of two or three miles, we had the first grand view of Penmanmawr; an immense rocky mountain, projecting into the sea, with the isle of Anglesea as a distance. It has no variety of line; but is one heavy, lumpish form, falling plumb into the water, without any of those little projections from it's base, which let a promontory down gently, as by a step; and which are, in general, great sources of beauty, as they prevent heaviness; and add variety\*. But here, as the scene is *merely grand*, without being at all indebted to beauty, this lumpish appearance as more simple, tends more strongly to impress the *grandeur* of the scene.

Round the lower regions of Penmanmawr the road appears, at a distance, winding like a

\* See vol. ii. p. 55, of Observations on the lakes and mountains of Cumberland, &c.





narrow shelf: but as we approach, we find it a noble terrace, defended by two good parapet-walls; one securing it from the sea below, and the other from the falling of the rocks above. The situation too of the road took a new form, as we arrived on the spot. Instead of appearing, as it did at a distance, to run along the bottom of the mountain, it now overlooked a tremendous precipice. — Formerly indeed this road was in *reality*, what it *appears at a distance*, a mere shelf, narrow, and without a parapet: and it was with great labour brought to its present state of perfection. The shivering face of the mountain was too unstable to work on; and the road, where it doubles the point, is formed upon vast solid arches; which make it a very curious piece of masonry.

Awful however as the scene is *below*, the mountain *above* presents a still more horrid idea. It has a hideous appearance. One uniform dreary aspect prevails over the whole body of it. There are no large parts; no projecting masses of broken rock, nor beautiful interlacing of soil, herbage, and wood; the whole is covered with one universal face of small shivering, flaty rock; as if a mass of these materials had been thrown

thrown together into one immense heap. The poet's idea of it is strictly geographical when he speaks of

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The rude rocks  
Of Penmanmawr, heaped hideous to the sky.

So little of any kind of verdure appears on it's surface, that we wondered what could tempt the wild goats, which clung about it, to climb it's heights.

We were told a story \* of an intrepid genius, who, riding a vicious horse along this road, before the parapet was made, took it into his head to teach the beast in this place to stand fire. With this intention he turned him suddenly round, and brought his head over the edge of the precipice. As he stood trembling in that position, the rider drew a pistol from his holster, and poising it close to the ears of the horse, fired it off. The greater terror overpowered the less; and the horse stood unmoved, except by one universal tremor, which shook his frame. The rider escaped the mischief his rashness deserved: but

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\* We had this relation from Mr. Brisco, a very worthy gentleman, the Collector of the customs at Beaumaris.

supposing

supposing he had now gained his end, he repeated the experiment an hour after on the plain below; but his horse, having now no counter-terror to contend with, broke away from all restraint, and threw his rider, who was killed on the spot.

That every part of Penmanmawr may be a scene of immensity, on it's summit stood formerly a castle, equal in grandeur to the mountain, which is it's base. In the ruins, it's vestiges, and numerous towers, may yet be traced. It's situation so lofty, and inaccessible, — it's extent — and it's strength, are all equally astonishing. It is thought to have been capable of holding twenty thousand men; tho the steep avenues leading to it, are such, that a hundred might have defended it against any number. But it is probable, it was meant rather as an asylum to the country, than as a fortrefs against an enemy.



## S E C T. VI.

**A**T the bottom of Penmanmawr, the scene shifted; the mountains receded; and we were presented with a spacious view of the Lavan-sands; and of the isle of Anglesea stretching wide beyond them. The great Irish road turns short to the left; winds along the edge of the sands, under the mountains, and near Bangor crosses the Menai; which is the channel, that separates Anglesea from the main.

As a nearer and pleasanter rout to Beaumaris, which was our next stage, we crossed the sands. They extend about five miles; and we steered over them by fixed poles, set up as marks to avoid quick-sands. As we approached the middle of this vast area, it

assumed a circular form, nearly indeed it's natural one; and the country, which invironed it's skirts, afforded a very noble piece of scenery. There is something peculiarly grand in these great amphitheatres of nature; where the eye, stationed in a center, especially if that center be on a spacious plain, and viewing a profusion of grand objects on every side, passes along mountains, vallies, rivers, towns, forests, islands, and promontories, in succession; contrasting one part with another; and every part, with the level area, which forms the fore-ground. The area of the amphitheatre before us, had now also an adventurous beauty. It was filled with people from the country gathering shell-fish, which is their common practice, on the retreat of the tide. Many of them had carts, and horses with panniers, which formed a number of little groups upon the sand; and made it a moving, and very amusing picture.

The objects, which compose this grand circle around the sands, taken in rotation, as they present themselves, are the promontory of Orm's-head standing out into the sea; and adjoining to it, on the right, the mountains of Penmanmawr, and Penmanbach, which

we

we had just left. From these runs a skirting of rich country, (*rich* in a picturesque light), formed into a recess by mountains; one of which delving into a peculiar abyss, is known by the name of the *Devil's-cauldron*. To this country succeeds, in the part opposite the sea, another rich scene. At the point of it lies Bangor, skreened by a woody distance, running out behind it. From thence the isle of Anglesea appears still farther distant; winding round like a long, low bank, towards the sea. Separated by a narrow channel from Anglesea rises Priest-holm, or Puffin's island; which another small channel divides from Orm's-head, from whence our view began. In this grand circle, the semi-diameter of which may be from six to ten miles, no part possesses peculiar beauty; yet the whole together is pleasing; and many pictures might be made from different portions of it: at least many excellent hints might be taken.

But if the forms of the objects are not quite correct, as indeed we rarely see in nature examples of good composition, yet in colouring, and light and shade, the whole range of this circling scenery, when we saw it, was trans-

scendent. The woods, and hills of Bangor, which arose full opposite to the setting sun, and all the isle of Anglesea, which received it's beams aslant, were spread with vivid light ; with tints and colours of great variety, tho always harmonious : while the mountains, on the opposite side, were in deep shadow. Here and there a prominent point was tipped with splendor ; and a few straggling rays, diverging along some mountain's side, would spread a kind of hazy light upon the valley beneath. In the mean time the chastised tint of so vast an area of sand was a pleasing contrast to all this radiance. —— Something magical possesses a picturesque eye within such a circle of great objects ; and if there had not been with us one or two of cooler imagination, who intimated, that the tide was approaching, there might have been some danger of our delaying, till we had been intangled by it — a case, which has sometimes happened to inadvertent travellers.

As we approached Anglesea, the town of Beaumaris, touched with the last ray of a parting sun, made a distinct appearance ; and beyond it Lord Bulkley's woods were in shadow.

dow. Puffin's-island was now hid; and a stretch of sand appeared to run out as far as Orm's-head. Soon after, we came to the channel of the Menai, over which we ferried, and were landed on a pebble beach, close to Beaumaris.



## S E C T. VII.

**I**T is a commonly received opinion, in these parts of Wales, that the whole tract of fand, over which we had just passed, was once a beautiful valley; and that Anglesea was separated from Carnarvonshire in this part, as well as in others, only by the streights of Menai. It is one of those traditionary stories, which seems founded on truth: and indeed the very name of Beaumaris, or the *beautiful marsh*, seems to indicate a situation, which that town once had, and which now it certainly has not.

In confirmation of this tradition a clergyman of those parts \* shewed us, among other Welsh MSS. an account of the breaking in of the sea upon this country. As the narrative

\* Mr. Myddelton, rector of St. George's near Denbigh.

has

has very much the air of truth, I shall give a translation of it.

" In the year 813 the castle of Treganway was burnt by lightning; and in the year 823 it was re-built. It was afterwards reduced by the Saxons, and destroyed. This castle stood within the present flood-mark, opposite to Penmanbach; and the road from Rhyddland-castle passed through it, by the boundary-stone, near those two rocks, which are called the *Brown-brothers*. These rocks make a part of the promontory of Llandidno, and stood opposite to the castle of Treganway. From hence the road ran in a strait line to the palace of Elis Clynog, which lay about a mile from Priest-holm island. This palace once commanded a very beautiful vale, now totally flooded; and known by the name of the Lavan-sands. For about the time when the castle of Treganway was destroyed by the Saxons, the sea broke in upon this country, and overflowed all the lands of the vale, which became a sand-beach, and took the name of *Lavan*, or *lamentation*, from the melancholy cries of its suffering inhabitants. It is said that two persons only escaped from the palace of Elis Clynog."

The

The clergyman, who shewed us this MS. told us farther, as I remember, that some of the monuments mentioned in it, particularly the boundary-stone, may still be seen at low-water.

This extensive flat is not less beautiful — perhaps more so, when the sea overspreads it. It becomes then a grand lake covered with shipping; and the objects around it are equally ornamental. The agitation of the water in a storm; and the reflection of all the grand images around it, in a calm, are additional objects of beauty. A gentleman of Beaumaris informed us, that sometimes the water in the bay is so still, that the reflections from Penmanmawr, and the mountains in its neighbourhood, may be seen in great splendor from the shores of Anglesea.

The town of Beaumaris stands low, and is defended by a large castle; which is scarce raised above the level of the flood, and is one of the strongest fortresses we met with among all the remains of Edward the first's prowess. It is a kind of double castle, built on a square, regular plan; and is fortified with towers on every

every side. The front of the inner-castle contains a noble room. The chapel also, to which we climbed with some difficulty, is worth looking into. This old fortress is in no repair, tho it is too perfect to be picturesque. A few goats are it's only inhabitants. They are kept in it, like prisoners of state, and are no little ornament to the place. They range with great agility among the walls, and turrets; and find some mode of access to every tuft of grass, almost on the loftiest parts of the castle.

The island of Anglesea is a naked scene. It is beautifully wooded along the shores of the Menai; and affords very pleasing landscapes: but it's internal parts promised us so little amusement, both from it's naked aspect, and the accounts we had received of it, that we were not tempted to traverse it's boundaries. "It is a tract of plain country, (says Mr. Gray,) very fertile; but picturesque only from the view it has of Carnarvonshire." To an antiquary in quest of Druid-remains, it furnishes ample amusement. But these were not our objects. We proposed therefore to take a boat,  
and

and sail up the channel of the Menai, as far as Carnarvon-bay; the banks of which channel, we were informed from all hands, would continue beautiful throughout: and from Carnarvon we proposed to explore the regions of Snowdon. But when we talked, on the subject of our intended navigation, with the learned in winds, and tides, we were informed, that unless both were favourable, the voyage, trifling as it appears, might be attended with danger. Even this little channel, we found, had it's Sylla, and Charybdis, to threaten inadvertent voyagers; and as neither wind nor tide favoured our purpose, we gave it up.



## S E C T. VIII.

OUR next scheme was to explore the regions of Snowdon first; and to visit Carnarvon, and the banks of the Menai afterwards.

With this view we set out in the morning from Beaumaris; and crossing the Lavan-sands a second time, more to the southward, we forded the river Ogwen, a rapid, and often dangerous stream; except when the water is low; and entered the hanging woods of Penthrlyn. The sun grew hot, and had scorched us over the sands. The coolness of these woods was a desirable shelter; and we had beautiful catches through their openings, of the mountains, islands, and promontories, we had just left. When we viewed all these *objects together* the day before, as we crossed the *Lavan* sands, they could be considered only as affording studies; but here they often formed good pictures, by the addition of a little woody scenery,  
on

on the fore-grounds. This mode indeed of viewing portions of landscape between the boles of trees is pleasing. The quick glance also of moving objects in those circumstances, is attended with amusement. We enjoy it the more, as we are eager to catch it before it is gone. “ Beyond that meadow, (says Mr. Gray, in a letter to Mr. Nicholls,) nods a thicket of oaks, that mask the buildings, and leave on either hand an opening to the blue glittering sea. Did you not observe how that white sail shot by, and was lost ? ” — Virgil too, describing a fleet entering a river, seizes the same image ; and gives his ships a more picturesque appearance, by presenting them through the interstices, and obscurity of the grove :

Ut celsas vidêre rates, atq. inter opacum  
Allabi nemus.

On leaving the woods of Penthryn, we entered a wild, disagreeable country, with mountains on the left, towards which we verged. But we met nothing among them worth our notice. They are in general, so uncouthly shaped, and so inharmoniously combined, that we were scarce rewarded with a single mountain-scene of any value. All this wild country

try passes under the name of the *Forest of Snowdon.*

Through many a yielding bog, and over  
many a dreary mountain we travelled :

Per rupes, scopulosque, aditique carentia saxa ;  
Quâ via difficultis ; quâque est via nulla. ——

In few places we could ride ; and where we could not, a servant was of no use in leading our horses ; for every one was obliged to lead his own ; which was a great inconvenience to those, who had sketches, and observations to make.

In fact, Snowdon is a collection of mountains, formed on the old gigantic plan of heaping mountain on mountain. You are kept in continual suspense. After ascending much rising ground, you climb the steep side of a precipice still higher. This, you think surely must be the summit of Snowdon. You are mistaken. Another steep ridge rises before you : and thus you ascend, as it were by stairs, the several stories of the mountain.

These scenes, the Cambro-Briton reverences as the last retreat of Llewelin from the power of Edward. If that persecuted prince had trusted more in these scenes, than in his own

prowess, he might have remained unconquered : but he descended with his army into the plain, and was ruined.

At length we arrived at the foot of, what seemed now, without doubt, to be the highest ridge of Snowdon ; from whence we had a fair view of what we conceived to be it's real summit. The day was clear ; and the mountain unincumbered with clouds. Pausing a while on this eminence, and looking down on the parts of the mountain we had passed, it made, on the whole, no very formidable appearance. The Welsh call Snowdon about twelve hundred yards high ; but they measure from the level of the sea ; and as the country, we have seen, ascends gradually many miles towards the summit, there remains no great quantity of precipitate height for, what is properly called, the *mountain* to appropriate. The geography therefore of Matthew of Westminster is not so very erroneous, as some have imagined, when he tells us, that Conway-castle lies at the foot of Snowdon ; tho in fact it lies twenty miles from the summit, which is commonly known by that name.

Tho we had thus ascended so nearly the end of our journey, we felt but little inclination to ascend

ascend higher. Indeed it was too late in the day ; for tho the summit of Snowdon appeared so near, we doubted not, from past experience, but we had many a weary step to take before we attained it. Whether there was a road for a horse we knew not ; but we were very sure, we should find no refreshment, of which both we, and our horses, began to be in great want.

—Instead therefore of ascending the summit of Snowdon, we contented ourselves with surveying the fertility of all the little vallies, and recesses, at our feet, which seemed luxuriant on every side. The Welsh indeed say, that this single mountain, (including, I suppose, all it's appendages,) would find summer-pasturage for all the cattle in Wales.



## S E C T. IX.

AS I cannot present the reader with any view of my own from the summit of Snowdon, I shall present him with one, extracted from an account given by Mr. Pennant, who ascended it to see the sun rise from so noble a center; and has collected a great variety of picturesque images, from which I shall select some of the most interesting.

The night was remarkable fine, and starry. Towards morning the stars fading away, left a short interval of darkness; which was soon dispersed by the dawn of day. The body of the sun appeared to rise like the moon without rays; but soon the sea, which extended on the west, began to glow with red. The prospect however disclosed gradually, as the mist, which enveloped the mountain, subsided. The perpendicular view furnished horrid ideas. "We looked down, (says he,) into numerous abysses,

which were concealed by eddies of vapour, like thick smoke, furiously circulating in a kind of rapid whirl-pools. Often, a gust of wind, making an opening in the clouds, gave us a vista towards some lake, or valley : and often the clouds, opening in various places at once, exhibited strange appearances of waters, rocks, and chasms. Then at once they would close ; and leave us involved in darkness. Separating again, they would fly off in wild eddies round the middle of the mountain, and expose in part both it's summit, and it's base. As we descended from this various scene, a thunder-storm overtook us, before we reached our horses. It's rolling among the mountains was inexpressibly awful. The rain was heavy. We mounted our horses, and gained the bottom with some hazard. The little rills, which on our ascent, trickled down the sides of the mountain, were now swelled into torrents ; and some of them appeared dangerous."

Having thus taken a view of Snowdon, if the reader will follow me to mount Lebanon, I will present him with a still grander view. The comparison of similar scenes, or of Nature's mode of *diversifying landscape* on the *same plan*, is among the most amusing topics of

of picturesque observation. — I met with the account here given of Lebanon in Volney's travels into Egypt, and Syria; from which I take, as I did from Mr. Pennant, a few of such passages, as appeared to me most descriptive, and picturesque.

“ Lebanon gives it's name to an extensive chain of mountains, inhabited by the Druzes; who enjoy among it's fastnesses some degree of liberty, amidst those vast territories, which are subject to Turkish tyranny. When you land on this coast, the loftiness, and steep ascent of this mountainous ridge, which seems to inclose the whole country, inspires you with astonishment, and awe. If you climb it in any part, the wide extended space at the top, becomes a fresh object of admiration. But to enjoy in perfection this majestic scene, you must ascend that summit of Lebanon, which is called *Sannin*. There on every side you see an horizon almost without bounds. In clear weather, the sight is lost over the deserts of Arabia, which extend to the Persian gulph. In another direction, you survey the sea, which washes the coast of Europe: and in a third, you look over the successive chains of mountains, which carry the eye, at least the

imagination, as far as to Antioch. You seem to command the whole world ; till the wandering eye, fated with surveying remote objects, turns at length to those, which are more within it's scope. It looks down on the vast profundity of the diminished coast lying below. It examines the rocks, woods, torrents, and declivities of the mountain. It examines the various vallies, often obscured by floating clouds ; while the swelling bases of the mountain, which on landing at the bottom appeared so magnificent, appear now only like the furrows of a field. In the mean time, if you hear thunder ; instead of bursting above you, it now rolls below.

“ If the traveller leave his lofty stand, and visit the interior parts of these mountains, the ruggedness of his path, the steepness of the descent, and the height of the precipices strike him with terror : but by degrees he begins to have confidence in the sagacity, and certain foot-steps of his mule ; and examines, at his ease, those grand, and picturesque scenes, which succeed each other. He sees villages ready to glide from the declivities, on which they stand : convents hanging on solitary eminences, as if nothing could come near them : rocks

rocks perforated by torrents, and formed into natural arches ; or worn perpendicularly, and resembling lofty walls. But these picturesque circumstances are often the occasion of very tragical events. Rocks lose their equilibrium, and rolling down on the adjacent houses, bury the inhabitants. Such an event, about twenty years ago, overwhelmed a whole village. And still more lately, the whole side of a hill, covered with vines, and mulberries, was detached by a sudden thaw ; and sliding down the side of a mountain, was launched like a ship from the stocks, into the valley beneath."



## S E C T. . X.

WE now return to Snowdon. What mount Lebanon may be in *a picturesque light*, I know not. Volney indeed speaks of many picturesque passages in it's wide regions : but this matter depends intirely on Volney's taste. With regard to Snowdon, however, I fear, not much can be said. As it no where appears connected enough as *one whole* to form a *grand object*; so neither has it any of those accompaniments, which form *a beautiful one*.

It is a bleak, dreary waste ; without any pleasing combination of parts, or any rich furniture, either of wood, or well-constructed rock. The elegant bard therefore who sang,

---

what solemn scenes on Snowdon's heights  
Descending slow, their glittering skirts unrolled,

did well in fixing his vision on a base, where the eye had nothing else to engage it's attention.

Our

Our trouble however in traversing this rugged country was not totally unrewarded. Tho Snowdon itself afforded us little amusement, we met with two or three beautiful scenes about Dolbaddern-castle, which lies at it's foot; and is one of those fortresses, built by Edward the first, to guard this avenue into the country. The castle appeared before us, at the distance of two miles, standing on the confines of a lake. The mountains around it, (which are called all appendages of Snowdon), fall into pleasing lines, forming a deep valley, and folding over each other in easy intersections. Indeed a body of water among mountains, if it have no other use, has at least that of shewing, by the little bays it forms, how one mountain folds over another; which strengthens the picturesque idea of a *graduating distance*.

As we descended towards the castle, we were drawn aside by a pleasant retreat called Combrunog; where a little river flows through two circular vallies, each about a mile in circumference; and each surrounded with mountains. Both areas being nearly plains, and on different levels, the river, having passed through one, falls in a cascade into the other. The whole





whole scenery is embellished with wood ; which is here the more striking, as it is in general, but thinly scattered in these regions.

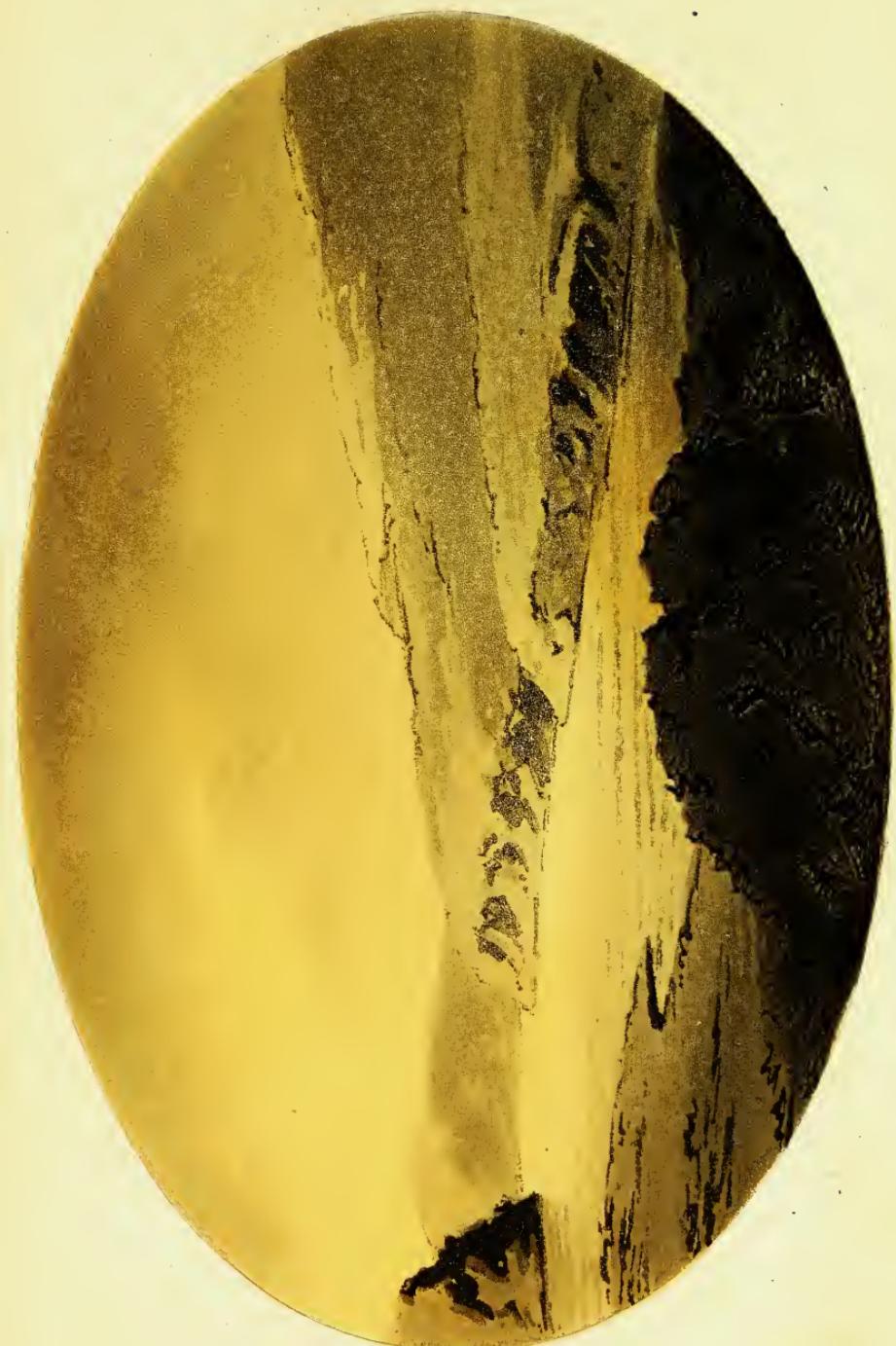
As we left Combrunog, and descended still nearer Dolbaddern, the scenery about it became more interesting. But as we had before the difficulties of ascent, they were now changed into those of descent. In one place we descended near a hundred stone-steps, or rather stones laid irregularly in the form of steps : and if our horses had not been those of the country, we should not easily have persuaded them to attempt a passage, so ill-adapted to quadrupeds. Through these, and other little difficulties, at length however we arrived at the bottom, where we found two lakes separated by a neck of land ; near which arose a knoll, much higher than the banks of the lakes, but inconsiderable when compared with the surrounding mountains. On this knoll stands the castle, which has never been a capital fortress ; and now exhibits little more, than one round, solitary tower : but it is a very picturesque fragment, and is more in union with the scene, than if it had been a larger building. A lonely tower is itself an emblem of solitude. — Having ascended the castle-

castle-hill, we had a good view of both the lakes.

The lower one is about two miles long, and half a quarter of a mile broad. It's lines are beautiful ; and it goes off, in good perspective ; but it has a contracted appearance, being sunk too much, like a gully, under lofty mountains, to which it is in no degree equivalent. In every lake-view the water and skreens should be proportioned, or there can be no very pleasing effect. In the lakes of Constance, and Geneva, and still more in the great lakes of America, the skreens are as little proportioned to the water, as in such a lake as this, the water is to it's skreens. In neither case the scenery is compleat.

The upper lake of Dolbaddern is still more a gully, than the lower, having scarce any banks, but mountains. Both lakes have a naked, desolate appearance ; being wholly destitute of furniture. In Cumberland, and Westmorland, such lakes would attract no attention. Here, a dearth of objects gives them consequence.

The upper lake however afforded an opportunity of observing the singular use of *reflections in uniting land and water.* In some parts  
the





the rough shores of the lake being fully reflected, occasioned that pleasing ambiguity, which left a doubt where the land ended, and where the water began. In other parts, when the reflections were not so highly coloured, the separation was more distinct; and the reflections gave an easy transition from one element to the other. In some places we observed a dark surface of water urging against a light shore, without any of those mediating tints, which reflections produce. This is unpleasing, and the painter will be cautious how he imitates it, tho' he may plead the authority of nature. It is not often however that we see these harsh connections between land and water: and in representation they may easily be softened by a small degree of tint, or shadow.

It was now a late evening hour, and tho' we had seen little, we had laboured much; and began to want refreshment, both for ourselves, and horses. Among the mountains of Cumberland we might generally have found it; but here all was desolation. We did not meet with a single village, and but few separate houses; and these were locked up, and the inhabitants gone with their cattle, as we were informed, to the higher parts of the mountain,

where

where they spend their summers in little dairy-sheds. Here they enjoy a cooler climate, and find fresher pasture for their herds, and flocks. It was too late however to investigate their haunts. The limpid rills of Snowdon were our only repast; to which a biscuit, or crust of bread, would have been an acceptable addition: but we had been improvident. We returned through the same sort of wild country which we had passed in the morning; and spent with hunger and fatigue, discovered at a distance, through the shades of evening, the towers of Carnarvon, with that kind of joy, with which seamen, after a rough voyage, discover a beacon.

## S E C T. XI.

CARNARVON is so beautiful a town, and it's situation so pleasing, that we were surprized we had never heard it particularly admired. It stands on a bay of the Menai; and on the land side, is washed by the river Saint. It is small, but well built; walled round, embellished with elegant walks, has a noble castle; and a good approach. The castle has the grandest appearance of any castle we have seen in Wales. It's front is rich, and magnificent; but when we enter it, we find it is not built on so large a scale, as we were led to expect, from the grandeur of the gate. The whole structure has more the air of a royal habitation, than of a fortress; and is so perfect, that it might easily be repaired. Our frugal ancestors were sparing of light: the apartments therefore of these grand mansions are commonly dark; tho their proportions are often

often elegant. One end of this castle, (where the Eagle-tower stands,) overlooks the Menai ; the other end surveys a winding creek, where the vessels of these narrow seas lie safely, and picturesquely, between two woody hills in a bottom ; which is a beautiful valley, when the tide ebbs, and a beautiful lake, when it flows.

The very pleasing situation of this town probably determined Edward the first in chusing it for the birth-place of his son. The chamber is still shewn, where the first English prince of Wales was born ; and a window on the opposite side of the castle, from which, tradition says, the queen escaped with her infant son. This is a piece of secret history, intimating, what I think none of our public accounts assert, the intention of the Welsh to detain him.

From Carnarvon we took our rout, along the banks of the Menai, which fully answered our expectations, and afforded us many beautiful views — more beautiful perhaps than if we had navigated the straits, as we at first intended. The eye, when stationed upon the water,

water, is so low, that unless the banks of the river are uncommonly high, the scenery is lost. The banks of the Wye in Herefordshire, are so lofty, that, in most places, the river, and it's appendages, are seen to more advantage from the bottom, than from the top. But the country about the Menai, is in general, of a moderate height, and affords almost every where, a good point of view; as it commands reaches, and windings of the river, which could not be seen with equal advantage from the surface. The island of Anglesea, on the other side of the channel, has generally a good effect; particularly about Sir Nicolas Baily's \* where the woods afford beautiful scenery.

The views of the Menai may be seen with advantage, either when the tide is high or low. The latter circumstance, I should suppose, might be more adapted to them; as the high-water mark, gives a great variation to the winding of the beach.

The cattle, which are bred in great numbers in Anglesea, and afford a great supply to the English markets, are driven in large herds

• Now Lord Uxbridge.

upon a point of low land, which runs into the Menai. Here, instead of being ferried over, they are forced, at the balance of the tide, into the channel, over which they swim into Carnarvonshire; a boat attending on each side of the swimming drove, to prevent accidents, and direct it's motion.

Bangor lies at the mouth of the Menai, near it's opening to the Lavan sands. It is an insignificant town; but some of the views around it are not unpleasant. One in particular we had, in which the tower of the church appeared to advantage, between woody hills, with a distant view of Anglesea, and the town of Beaumaris.

Having thus performed our expedition to Anglesea, Snowdon, and Carnarvon, we returned to Denbigh; having left part of our company there, who did not choose to encounter so rough a march.

## S E C T. XII.

FROM Denbigh we pursued our rout along the vale of Cluydd, with which we were already acquainted, as far as Ruthin. There, instead of mounting the steeps of Penbarris \*, which we had before descended, we continued in the vale to the end of it; and compleated our view of that rich, and beautiful scene.

As we leave Ruthin, the mountains which form the vale, retire into frequent recesses. Their tops are commonly smooth; their bases woody. But their shapes and lines are greatly varied, tho' the vale itself makes only one large curve: just as the general form of a vista, cut through a forest, is every where partially broken by the various shapes, growth, age, or situation of the several trees, which compose it.

\* See page 114.

As we approach the end of the vale, having passed through a space of more than twenty miles, the mountains draw nearer, till they insensibly close it up; finishing the whole in a noble bay of cultivation. Having ascended the higher grounds, we had a grand retrospect of the whole vale in one vast scene. It's bosom, interspersed with lawns, cottages, and groves, appears winding in perspective between the hills, till every form is lost in an expanse of woody distance; while the hills, on each side, take the several lines which distance gives, one after another, as they retire; till at St. Asaph, the whole landscape unites insensibly with the sea. In a clear day, the castle of Denbigh, the tower of St. Asaph, and various other objects of the vale, if the light fall happily upon them, might probably enrich the view. But when we saw it, all was lightly obscured by a thin azure tint, which could not well be called mist, but threw a slight degree of obscurity over the face of the landscape. Each mode of atmosphere hath it's peculiar beauty, and it is difficult to say, which is more picturesque. One gives *clearness*; the other *softness*; the former, a greater *scope to the eye*, the latter to the *imagination*.

As

As we leave the vale of Cluydd, we enter a disagreeable country ; and had an unpleasant morning's ride among wastes, and open commons on our way to Llangollen. We travelled many miles on high grounds, till we came at length, without any sudden rise, to a precipitate descent ; which, in the course of a rapid mile, let us down into the vale of Crucis, a sweet recess ; which made us some amends for the uninteresting country we had passed. The ruins of Abbey Crucis, which gives name to the vale, stand at one end of a flat meadow, about a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth. It is bounded on one side by a mountain-ridge, with little variety of line, save what it receives from a few oaks, straggling about it's summit, and forming groups here and there, which just serve to break it's continuity. It's bare sides, descending steep to the meadow, are received there by a piece of rich woody scenery, which adorns the banks of a rivulet. This mountain-skreen, tho it wants the beauty of variety itself, yet contrasts with several little hills ; which skreen the meadow on the opposite side, and are in general round

and detached, some of them bare, and others woody, with little recesses between them.

The remains of the abbey are considerable; and many of the parts picturesque. The east, and west windows of the great church are intire; and much of the walls. The situation of the town may be traced, but the whole is so intirely overgrown with wood, and choked with rubbish, that we could not trace the plan with any accuracy.

A judicious hand might make these ruins, and their environs, a very pleasing scene. To clear away some of the rubbish, and some of the wood, is all the decoration which the abbey requires: and as it stands near one end of the long meadow just mentioned, a simple walk might be traced round the whole scene, in the form of an irregular ellipsis. The ruins, which might be considered as a focus, would be the principal object; and a little planting might hide, and discover them with great beauty, and contrast; exhibiting sometimes a *distinct view*, and sometimes one *at band*; here the *whole*, and there some *distinguished part*.

The flatness of the meadow is perhaps rather a beauty. Beauty is derived from two sources;

sources ; from objects themselves, and from their contrast with other objects. In contrast even deformity may be one of these sources ; and produce beauty, as discords in music, produce harmony. If however so extensive a flat, tho diversified with wood, should be found to hurt the eye, part of the meadow might with great ease be floated with a lake.

But the walk need not be confined to the meadow. In some places it might skirt along the slopes of the hills ; in others it might climb them ; and exhibit new scenes, of which the place is fruitful. One view it might exhibit from the higher grounds, which is lost, I believe, in the lower, and that is, of Crows-castle, or Dinas-bran ; which stands upon a lofty summit, and assists the scene by the introduction of a distance.

The only thing, which disgusts the eye through this whole scenery, is the lumpishness of some of those hills, which are opposite to the *continued skreen*. In a scene of mere grandeur, a lumpish hill may heighten the idea \* ; but where beauty is meant to par-

\* See remarks on Penmanmawr, p. 126.

ticipate, and especially where the objects are small, it disgusts. These hills however might be greatly improved by a little judicious *semi-planting*, which might be so contrived, as to vary the line, and take off much from the heaviness of the appearance. I have known some improvers adorn a lumpish hill by planting it *all over*. By this mode of planting they have gained little; transforming only a round hill into a round bush. The woody-hill, which skreened Conway-castle was of this kind.

Having viewed *in idea* such beauties, as the scenery before us might receive from a little judicious art, we are hurt at seeing it *in reality* so exceedingly injured. The proprietor has just now taken it into his head to improve it. A large square pond is dug in front of the ruins. The rivulet, which glides and murmurs naturally under the mountain-skreen, is here taught another lesson. It is directed to a flight of stone-steps, down which it is made to fall in a regular cascade, and enter the pond at right angles. The pond is adorned with Chinese railing, painted a lively green. A square walk is laid out between the rail and the

the water ; and a summer-house, tipped with a gilded ball, and stationed opposite the cascade, is just finished. All this however we can bear, because nothing is done, but what might be undone ; but if this man of taste should stretch his hand towards the ruin itself, in the same style of improvement, we should find it a difficult matter to repress indignation. In these remarks I am not personal ; for I know not even the name of the improver.



## S E C T. XIII.

**A**S we left the vale of Crucis, we entered directly a valley of a different kind ; but of it's kind the most interesting. It has no scenes of grandeur to boast. It's beauties, in a humbler style, are merely sylvan. It extends nearly two miles in length, with a proportional degree of breadth. It's sides are little more than easy swelling banks, variously broken. At the bottom runs the Dee, which gives it's name to the valley ; and, tho not too important, is here a river of some consequence. A large river would be unsuitable to the scene. We want only a shallow stream to murmur among the rocks and stones, which compose it's channel.

All the other objects of this valley are as much in harmony, as the river. We saw nothing striking from one end of it to the other ; no peculiar feature ; nothing that could give it form

form *in description*. It had no bold skreen ; no flat extended meadow ; no magnificent ruin : but was varied into so pleasing a combination of parts ; the ground so beautifully thrown about ; the little knolls, and vallies so diversified, and contrasted ; the trees so happily interspersed ; and the openings, and windings of the river displayed to such advantage ; in a word, the whole formed into such a variety of pleasing, natural scenes, that we scrupled not to call this valley one of the most interesting we had seen.

The source of all it's beauty is the harmonious combination of it's parts. Composition is the life of scenery. It is not trees, it is not rocks, it is not varied ground, it is not altogether, that makes a beautiful scene. From the same pallet we may see a picturesque landscape ; or a daubed canvas. The colours are the same in both ; in the former only they are more artfully combined.

In composition alone — I mean picturesque composition — nature yields to art. Nature is full of fire, wilderness, and imagination. She touches every object with spirit. Her general colouring, and her local hues, are exquisite. In composition only she fails. We speak however

ever in this matter like the fly on the column. Her plans are too immense for our confined optics. They include kingdoms, continents, and hemispheres; and may be as elegant, as they are incomprehensible. Could we take in the whole of her landscapes at one cast; could we view the Hyrcanian forest as a grove; the kingdom of Poland as a lawn; the coast of Norway as a piece of rocky scenery; and the Mediterranean as a lake; we might then discover a plan justly composed, and *perhaps* beautiful even in a painter's eye. But as we can view only detached parts, we must not wonder, if we seldom find in any of them *our confined ideas* of a whole. Sometimes however we do; as in the valley we are now admiring; in which nature has given us a succession of sylvan scenery, as correct in the whole, as it is elegant in it's parts.

The beauty of nature's scenes, like those of art, depends much also on the light, in which they are seen. The same landscape, which appears to advantage under a setting sun, may lose many a charming touch, and many a beautiful form, when seen through the haziness of a morning. Some capital part may require a deep shadow to give it force; which can only be

be given by a strong light. Other passages again are softened by shade. Their features may be too strong to endure a blaze of light. But *this* valley, I should imagine, like some bodies, that will bear all climates, has a constitutional strength, which no mode of atmosphere can injure.

If this valley were added to the vale, in which the ruin of Abbey-Crucis stands, and united with it in one plan, it would form a most pleasing and varied continuity of scene. From views of grandeur we might insensibly glide into a path of retirement :

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fallentis semita vitæ,

where groves, and rivulets draw the mind to meditation, and inforce wisdom more effectually than books, and pulpits.

In the valley of the Dee very little improvement would be necessary. There will always be a rudeness in the works of nature. A *polished gem* she never produces. In the vastness of her designs the minutiae of finishing is overlooked. Man's microscopic eye requires more exactness. A little rubbish, and underwood might be cleared away ; a few openings might have a good effect ; and here and there, a proper

a proper object, if it were truly sylvan, might appear to advantage: but a path could hardly be conducted better, than the road in which we pass through it. It winds regularly along the slope of one of the skreens, and could only be improved by a little variation. As the space is large, it might branch out in other directions; climbing sometimes to the top, and sometimes descending to the bottom. In its natural rudeness however, the whole scene has so many innate charms, that the traveller, in passing through it, may be satisfied with it, as it is; and has only to fear lest some thrifteless hand may despoil it of its beauties.



## S E C T. XIV.

THE town of Llangollen (or Clangothlin, as it is pronounced,) lies at the end of this valley. It is a place of no consequence; but pleasantly seated on the banks of the Dee, Some of the hills, which surround it, are woody, and others smooth. The bridge is esteemed among the curiosities of Wales. It is founded on a rock, is an ancient structure, ornamented with large buttresses; and is a picturesque object. The bed of the river, in this part, does not consist of detached stones, and fragments, as the beds of mountain-rivers commonly do; but is a continued surface of solid rock, variously broken, or rather channelled by the rapidity of the stream. These rocky channels give the bed of the river a peculiar form; and the water, which is cast in these molds, a peculiar mode of agitation. But the river, when we saw it, scarce occupied one third of it's bed.

From the church-yard at Llangollen we had a very amusing view of the Dee, and it's woody banks ; but the perspective of the river from this stand is not very pleasing. This view therefore is rather what the painters call a *study* than a *composition* ; and in this light many of the parts are admirable.

From the same stand we had a good view also of Crow-castle, which is no very picturesque object ; but it breaks the line of the round hill, on which it stands. In itself however, at least upon the spot, it is a scene of grandeur ; not occupying less space through it's whole circumference than three quarters of a mile. It has withstood the storms of many a century ; and tho in the most exposed situation, preserves still *a form* ; shewing here and there, the remnant of a tower, the fragment of a wall, and other vestiges, from which it's ancient prowess may be traced. There is a meagre spring within it's precincts ; but this is always dry before the end of summer ; and reservoirs, which were it's chief supply, must have been a very precarious one. What could make a place so ill supplied with water, worth the trouble of fortifying so strongly, does not appear. From the situation of many of the Welsh castles, we are led to believe them of  
three

three kinds — such as were the residence of chiefs — the defence of passes — or temporary places of refuge for the country in time of alarm. These latter were commonly seated on lofty mountains, and were of immense size. We have already seen one of them on Penmanmawr \* ; and it is probable Dinas Bran might have been another.

Before we left Llangollen, we could have wished our time had permitted us to visit the lake of Bala, about fifteen miles to the west of it; which is said to be the most beautiful sheet of water in Wales. It is surrounded by wooded hills, and fringed banks, which are reflected from a mirror of the purest water. The lake of Bala is the source of the river Dee; on the banks of which, near its exit from the lake, in ancient times, prince Arthur was fostered by good old Timon, whose dwelling was

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full low in valley green,  
Under the foot of Auran, mossy hoar;  
From whence the Dee, as purest silver clean,  
His tumbling billows rolls with gentle roar.

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\* See page 129.

At present however, the good people of Bala, instead of fostering princes, foster flocks of sheep; and spin a kind of fine yarn, of which they make the softest, and pleasanteſt stockens. They who wear their winter-stockens for ſhew, must be content to submit to the more rigid texture of cotton or worſted; but they who wear them for comfort, eſpecially people in years, may get them of the beſt kind, from the good folks of Bala.

Befides the lake of Bala, we ſhould have been glad to have ſeen ſome other parts of Merionethſhire, moſt of which is ſaid to afford fine landscape; particularly the vale of Fef-tiniog, which is more celebrated than any other ſcene in Wales. In this county alſo ſtands the famous mountain of Cader Idris.

From Llangollen we purſued our rout to Chirk-castle, along a noble natural terrace, which overlooks the winding of the Dee, and it's opposite banks.

The ſituation of Chirk-castle, which belongs to Mr. Myddelton, does not ſeem the moſt eligible. As you approach, there is a rudeneſs, and nakedneſs about it, without any of those

those *grand parts* of nature, which compensate the want of *beauty*. Behind the house hangs a wood; but it does not appear as we approach. The general air of the house is magnificent, from its round towers, and elevated situation; but on a nearer survey it appears regular and formal *without*; and *within* detached, incumbered, and inconvenient. The rooms form the sides of a large square; the angles of which are adorned with round towers. It stands in a park; which may be beautiful, when some new plantations have attained their growth. The garden is laid out in taste; and contains some pleasing scenery, particularly about the green-house \*.

A few miles from Chirk-castle stands Win-stay, a rival mansion; the seat of sir W. W. Wynne. From a distant view, which was all we had of it, it seems to enjoy a much more advantageous situation, than Chirk-castle; standing on the banks of the Dee, and overlooking a great profusion of woody scenery; with Chirk-castle as a principal object.

\* The reader will remember, that this was written above 30 years ago.

These were the last places we visited in Wales ; and here we took a final leave of the Dee, after having had three or four very agreeable interviews with it. We saw it first, in all it's glory, at Chester ; where it introduces it's waters to the sea. We found it afterwards in the form of a pure, pastoral stream, in the valley we had just past, to which it gives it's name. This idea however is lost at Llangollen, where it got among grander objects, and took a more romantic cast. — It's vague course gives it all this variety. When it leaves the lake of Bala, it runs almost due east about thirty miles, and then takes a sudden turn to the north ; in which direction it continues, till it arrive at Chester. From thence it bends towards the west in it's course to the sea ; so that it forms a bow, to which a line drawn from the lake of Bala to Air-point would make the string. But tho when we saw it in the middle of June, it was every where a mild, and at loudest, but a murmuring stream, it is notwithstanding, in it's furious moods, uncommonly turbulent. Receiving vast and sud-

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den supplies from the mountains, into a channel naturally precipitate, it is immediately raised ; and in it's impetuosity overturns every thing it meets. Very different is the character of the Conway. It too receives great and sudden supplies ; but having a more horizontal channel, it passes quietly, and gently, through the country, in it's course to the sea.



## S E C T. XV.

WE now entered Shropshire by Oswestry; from which town to Shrewsbury the country is so flat, and sandy, that we scarce met a single object to engage our attention.

The many marks of antiquity about Shrewsbury give it a venerable appearance. It's situation is singular. The Severn having performed a devious course through Montgomeryshire, and having now collected abundant supplies, and some of them from rivers of name, enters Shropshire with a full stream. About the middle of the county it meets a rocky eminence, which it forms into a peninsula. On the isthmus rises an eminence still higher. The former eminence was chosen for the situation of a *town*: the latter offered itself naturally for the site of a *castle*. Which took the first possession — which was the principal, and which the appendage, tradition

dition leaves dubious. Both were admirably chosen. This was the origin of Shrewsbury ; which received it's name from it's situation. Shrewsbury is the corruption of an old Saxon word, which signifies *a bushy hill*. In former times therefore, it is probable the castle, and towers of Shrewsbury would appear to better effect rising from a woody hill, with the river circling beneath, than they do now, when the hill is ungarnished : for as a town consists necessarily of many uniform parts, it appears to most advantage, when some of those parts are judiciously skreened.

Cæsar's description of a town in Gaul, exactly suits Shrewsbury. “ Flumen, ut circino circumductum, pæna totum oppidum cingit.” You enter Shrewsbury by one bridge, and leave it by another, over the same river. The first is a grand, old structure, with a noble gate ; the latter is modern. — The walls about the town are pleasant, and amusing. Indeed they could hardly be otherwise in the neighbourhood of such a river as the Severn.

On a plain, about three miles from the town, was fought that celebrated battle, between Henry IV. and Hotspur, which the drama hath made more famous, than either history, or





or tradition. The most noted action of that day, was Falstaff's fighting a full hour by Shrewsbury-clock with Percy, after he had been killed. The scene of this battle is still shewn by the name of Battle-field.

From Shrewsbury to Wenlock, the country becomes more hilly. The Wrekin bore us company, on the left, through most of the way. The appearance of this mountain is rather singular. It is of a round, uniform shape, rising in a country not indeed flat ; but very little elevated.

The common toast of this country, is a *health round the Wrekin*: and the insularity of the mountain at once turns the *health* into a wish of universal benevolence. A *health round Snowdon* would be confined. That mountain crannies out so widely, and takes so many longitudinal, and latitudinal excursions, that it is hard to determine it's environs : and a person might be twenty miles from it's summit, and yet his situation in some appendage of the mountain, might be so ambiguous, as to leave it in doubt, whether he came properly within the sphere of the wish. But a *health round*

*round the Wrekin* is subject to no ambiguity. It is to be hoped only that the good people of Shropshire do not mean to confine their benevolent wish to their own county.

Tho' this mountain is a detached object, it adds beauty to the scene; at least in a country, which is barren of scenery. It's surface was pleasantly tinged when we saw it, with a variety of hues, formed by pasture, fallows, wood, and cultivation, all melted together, by distance, into one rich mass. As the year advanced, all these views would change, and form a new assemblage of colouring. The pasture would become burnt, the corn yellow; and the wood tinged with its autumnal hue. It might be more beautiful under these circumstances; or it might be more discordant. Nothing is more transient, and uncertain, than the vegetable tints of nature.

It is recorded of the elder Charles, that the side of a cultivated hill was an object, at which he always expressed disgust. He would say, it was like a beggar-woman's petticoat, patched with various clouts of yellow, green, and red. The observation is certainly just; and marks the royal observer's taste, which indeed was never questioned. But it must be supposed,

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the king spoke of a hill only when it is seen too near the eye. At a proper distance, when all this patchwork is blended together; when the harsh edges of discordant hues disappear, and all is harmonized into one uniform, tho varied surface, it may still be beautiful. Whoever has observed the operation of cleaning a painter's-pallet, may have an easy illustration of this distinction. When the colours are ranged in order, reds, greens, and blues, by the side of each other, nothing can be more inharmonious. But after the day's duty, when the refuse is scraped together into the colour-pot, you often see, on blending the mass together, the most harmonious tints, reds, blues, and yellows, not perfectly mixed, but broken, melting into each other, marbled, and contrasted perhaps with some dingy nameless colour, which is produced, in those parts where a perfect mixture of all the colours has taken place. The production of such an effect is like striking the cords of musical instruments : you have agreeable tones, but no composition.

Besides these tints on the sides of mountains, which arise from natural hues, we often see other tints arising from different modifications of the air; and other causes, perhaps unknown,

known. These are local and uncommon. Among the mountains and lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, we had frequent opportunities of observing them.

With regard to the form of the Wrekin, in some positions it appears almost the regular section of a globe: but it generally takes a form more varied; and in some views it is a continuous ridge. It's greatest extent stretches along the Severn; where, at it's foot, stand the ruins of Bildwas-abby. We did not see them, as we were informed they were heavy, and un picturesque. But I should think they must be very bad, if they cannot form a scene; with such a river in front; and such a hill for a back-ground.

In the middle of the road we took notice of an oak of singular beauty, and dimensions, known by the name of the *Lady-oak*. The road is widened around it, and it is left at full liberty to extend it's shade, and shelter, to all travellers. A circumstance of this kind on a road, besides it's use, has so beautiful an effect, that it is a pity we do not oftener find it.

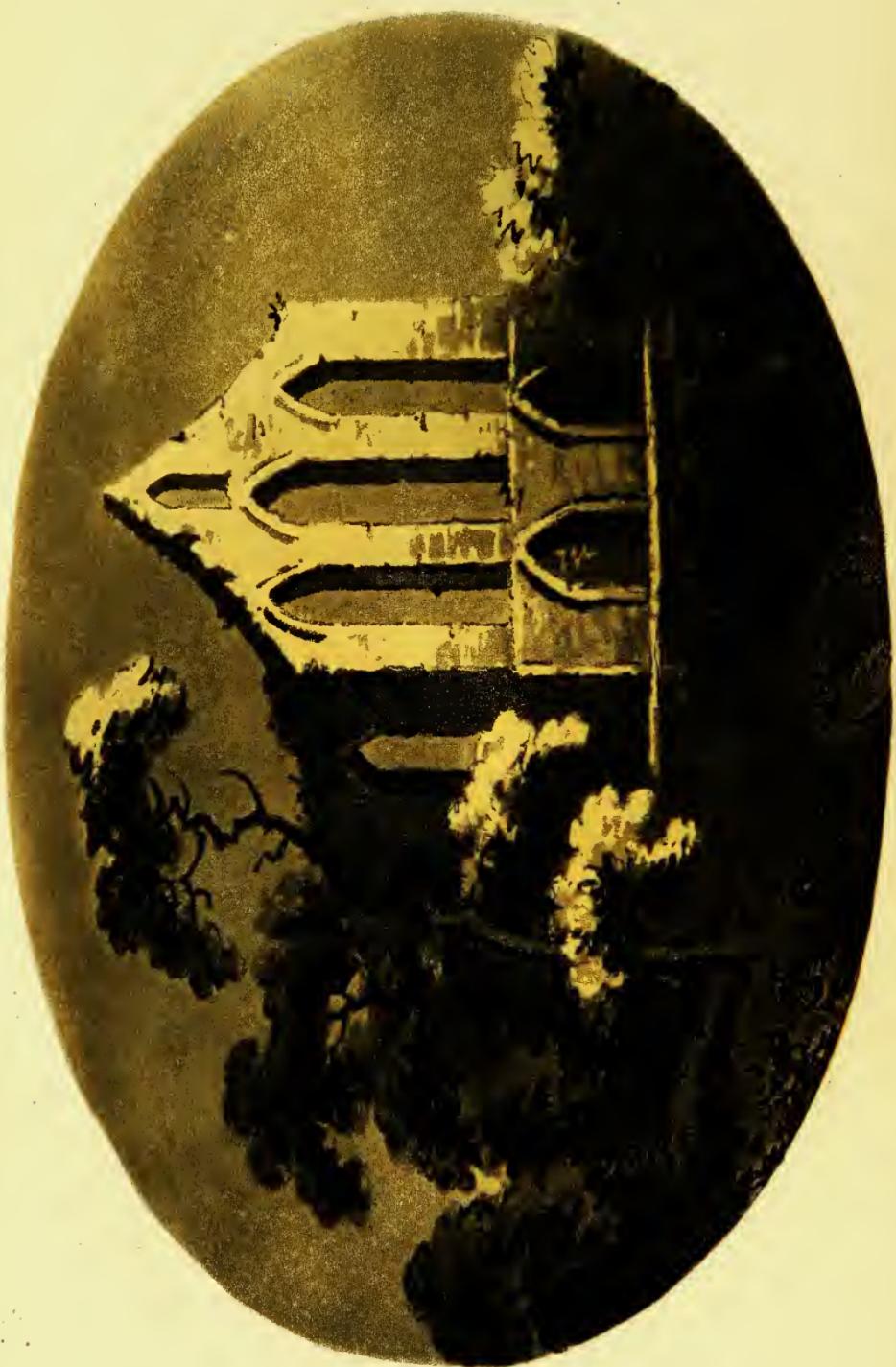
The only remarkable piece of scenery we met in our way to Wenlock, was a lofty bank, known by the name of Wenlock-edge.

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We saw it at a distance, running like a long, black-ridge, covered with wood, athwart the country. As we approached, the road being every where hid with thickets, it appeared matter of wonder, how a passage could be contrived to *ascend* it, for it was plainly too continuous to *evade*. When we arrived on the spot, we found a winding road cut through it. This work has been effected with great labour, and is steep, as may be imagined; but not very incommodious. When we had attained the summit, we had no descent on the other side; this long ridge being the slope only of one of those grand, natural terraces, by which one tract of country sometimes descends into another.







## S E C T. XVI.

**A**T Wenlock we were entertained with the ruins of an abbey. The scenery around it is less inviting, than we commonly find in the situation of those monastic dwellings. It stands, as abbeys often do, on the banks of a rivulet; but these banks have nothing very interesting about them. All their furniture is gone.

We found fault with Abbey-Crucis for being too much incumbered. The ruins of Wenlock-abbey offend from being too detached. They are not only unadorned with scenery; but they stand naked, and staring in three parts, without any connection, either of wood, or ruin, as if distributed into three lots, and exposed to sale. In their present state therefore we consider them only as *studies*: if they had been *connected with each other*

*other by fragments of old walls : and connected with the ground by a few heaps of rubbish ; and a little adorned with wood, we should have considered them in a higher style, and looked at them as pictures.*

But it may be said, a ruin *should be desolate* — It is true : but we make a distinction. It should be *desolated by art* ; not by *nature*. Nature claims it as her own ; and all nature's productions may flourish around it. With trees particularly, uncut, and unmutilated, it may be adorned with great profusion, without injuring the idea of desolation.

It is merely however in a *picturesque light* that I can call the ruins of Wenlock-abbey *unconnected*. In an *architectural view*, they all belong to the great church of the monastery, the plan of which may easily be traced. Part of the south aisle, and it's end-windows are left ; a fragment of the north aisle, and a fragment of the west. At Abbey-Crucis we had a greater mass of external ruins, but here is more of the inside work ; which is often very beautiful ; and in this ruin particularly, all of it being constructed in the purest Gothic. There are a few other remains ; part of which are supposed to have been cloisters ; but nothing

thing of any considerable extent, except these three fragments.

In the neighbourhood of Wenlock happened, not many weeks before we were there, (May 1773,) a remarkable *slip*, as it was called, on the banks of the Severn, between Cole-broke-dale, and Buildway-bridge, which greatly alarmed the whole country. A piece of high ground, containing at least twenty acres, gave way; and rushing into the channel of the Severn, pushed it forward; leaving behind many horrid chasms, some of them thirty feet wide. A house standing on the ground, was moved many yards from its station; and the inhabitants had but just time to escape. Indeed they had been swallowed up, if they had not fortunately fled in a right direction. A turnpike road was removed; and thrown up edge-ways; and the Severn, taking a new course, gave room for future litigation by this strange removal of property. Many thought this great convulsion was owing to an earthquake, as it was accompanied with a noise; but it seems to have been more local, than earthquakes generally are.

From Wenlock to Bridgenorth the country is hilly and woody. The falling tower of Bridgnorth makes an odd appearance, as we approach it. We had heard much of the views from the castle-hill. They consist of the windings of the Severn; and the meadows along it's banks. But there is nothing remarkably beautiful in the objects; and something very disagreeable in the *composition* of them.— At the siege of this castle by Henry II. a singular piece of loyalty is recorded. Henry pressing the siege with vigour, had advanced too near the walls. Hubert de St. Clare, one of his generals, stood by his side; and perceiving an archer from the tower taking aim at the king, who was conspicuous by a golden crown round his helmet, had just time to interpose between him, and fate: he received the arrow in his breast, and dropped dead at the king's feet.— To endeavour to rescue a friend in battle, where the chance may be equal, is a slight effort, in comparison with this, where a certain blow is received, without any idea of self-defence.— The king, as may be supposed, was overwhelmed

whelmed with grief; and had no way left of showing his gratitude, but by taking St. Clare's infant daughter under his protection — giving her a princely education; and obtaining for her an honourable match.



## S E C T. XVII.

**O**N leaving Bridgenorth, we found the country wild, sandy, and heathy. A little above Pool-hall, we had a beautiful distance, seen obliquely, of the windings of the Severn, which we easily traced, tho the river itself was frequently concealed. The same view appeared afterwards in front.

A little beyond the three-shive stone, we had another very picturesque distance on the right, over a woody bottom; which likewise opened again, still more beautiful and extensive, as we ascended the hill, before we reached the turnpike. Indeed the whole road is a noble terrace, affording views on every side.

The church at Kidderminster is a good object. From hence the road becomes close and woody. The views break out again towards Westwood, the seat of sir Herbert Packington, where we had a good distance. At this house

Mr.

Mr. Addison is supposed to have collected his materials, and drawn his inimitable portrait of sir Roger de Coverly.

Having passed the sweet groves of Omberfley, we got again into a flat country; where the only distance we saw, was now and then an interrupted view of the Malvern hills, on on the right.

Worcester is one of the neatest, and most beautiful towns in England. The whole place has an air of elegance. The town-house makes a good appearance, as we passed it; but the profusion of it's ornaments, I fear, would not bear a close inspection. The great church is a beautiful Gothic pile, and deserves more admiration than it generally finds. The tower is elegantly adorned. As a whole, it should have been loftier; but it was once probably only the support of a spire, if a spire was ever a Gothic ornament. All the other proportions of the church are pleasing; the pillars and ornaments are light and airy.

The good bishop Hough's monument, by Rubiliac, is a masterly work. The figure of the bishop, clasping his hands, and looking up,

up, in a strong act of faith, deserves any praise. I have no idea of more in sculpture. An inanimated form, however fair, is a meagre effort of art; compared with a figure, characterized like this. The lines of an elegant human body are highly beautiful; but still they affect the *eye* only: when character, and expression are added, they affect the *soul*\*. The bishop lies in his full episcopal habit; and yet, (such is the exquisite touch of the master,) his marble robes sit as light, and easy upon him, as his lawn used to do. If it were not a kind of *Sutorian* remark †, I should observe, that his heavy shoe is the only part of his dress, which is exceptionable. The figure of Religion is a good figure; but very inferior to that of the bishop; and is besides ill-balanced.

The library is worth seeing. It is a circular room, about sixty feet in diameter, and was formerly the chapter-house. The roof is supported by a single pillar in the middle: but we sometimes see better proportioned rooms of this kind adjoining to cathedrals.

\* See this observation carried farther in the Western tour, p. 21.

† The story of Apelles and the cobler is well known.

As we leave Worcester we have a good retrospect of it from the hill about a mile beyond it : we then enter the flat country again.

A little short of *Pershire* an extensive view opens in front. One scene rises behind another ; and Pershore church appears beautiful among the woods. The whole is set off by a very remote distance.

From Pershore we entered the vale of Eversham. The *Abbot's-tower* is a piece of unrivalled architecture of it's kind. It was finished just before the dissolution took place ; and having escaped all the injuries, and violence of the succeeding times, it still exhibits a beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture, in it's latest period.

## S E C T. XVIII.

THE vale of Eversham is among the most extensive vales in England. It runs along the banks of the Avon from Tewksbury in Gloucestershire, to Stratford in Warwickshire. It is as rich also as it is extensive. But it is rich in the farmer's eye, not in the painter's. I scarce remember meeting a more unpicturesque tract of country. As it is *called a vale*, and by that circumstance reminds us of the vale of Cluydd, and other vales, which are confined by noble limits, and spread with a varied surface, the disappointment was the greater. The vale of Eversham, in a picturesque light, is little more, than an immense flat corn-field; and we saw nothing in it but uniform streaks of growing corn of different colours, and running in different directions. When it becomes a distance at Broadway-hill, and all regularity is removed, it presents the beauty of other extensive scenes of cultivation.

Having

Having crossed the vale of Eversham, we rose into a hilly country; but the hills are smooth, and naked. The imagination by planting, may form them into beautiful scenes: but unadorned, they are dreary. They abound however with sheep-walks; and often entertain the eye with beautiful groups.

As we approach Chapel-house, we have a good flat distance. On the left, we pass lord Shrewsbury's; and soon after, a woody dip, on the right, accompanies us almost to Woodstock. In some places Blenheim-castle, partly concealed in woods, appearing over the trees, gives grandeur to the scene.

As we leave Woodstock towards Oxford, the plain at Campsfield, and the distance beyond it, are well balanced; and set off each other. The approach to Oxford, on this side, is no way interesting \*.

Between Oxford and Benfington we found little that was pleasing. Beyond that town, the road is hilly, and interspersed with copses, which sometimes produce a good effect.

\* See this country more described in Observations on the lakes of Cumberland, &c.

As we leave Nettle-bed, the common, the woods beyond it, and the distance beyond that, make a pleasing assemblage. The road from thence winds agreeably among woody hills, as it did when we left Bensington.

The first view of Henly, lying among folding hills, is picturesque ; and the approach to it, through a noble vista, along a valley near two miles in length, has, from it's regularity, the beauty at least of *propriety* to recommend it. The tower of the church fronts the vista ; and gives still farther intimation, that we are approaching a town. The back-ground is composed of woody hills. A vista of this kind at the entrance of a town, is one of those connecting circumstances, which draws the eye gradually from one mode of object to another ; and prevents abruptness. The two objects united here, are a town, and a country. A vista partaking both of the regularity of the one ; and of the natural simplicity of the other, is a good connecting link. Where objects indeed are small, an introduction is unnecessary. A house, tho a formal object, if it be not superb, may stand in the midst of rural ideas. But when the eye is to dwell long on a large object, as on a town, or a palace,

palace, a connecting tye is natural. Indeed nature generally introduces a change of objects in this gradual way ; joining one country to another, with some circumstances, which participate of both.

About the 29th stone, the variety of open ground, copses, and distances on the right, are amusing.

Near the 22d stone, the high trees at the end of the road, present a good group ; but beauties of this kind scarce deserve mentioning. Among all the beauties of nature, nothing is so transient as a tree, which is liable to so many accidents. A scene therefore, which depends merely on a few trees, is not worth recording.

From hence we struck over Hounslow-heath to Kingston, where we entered Surrey.

June 19th, 1773.

THE END.

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
*R I V E R W Y E,*

AND SEVERAL PARTS OF  
SOUTH WALES, &c.

RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO

*PICTURESQUE BEAUTY:*

MADE IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1770.

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By WILLIAM GILPIN, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY,  
AND VICAR OF BOLDRE NEAR LYMINGTON.

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THE FIFTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

As this little work is still thought worth the notice of the public, a new edition of it in large octavo hath been printed, with a set of new etchings, as the old plates were too much worn to be of farther use.—A small edition hath also been printed, as a more portable companion to those who wish to take it with them, in their travels through Wales.



TO

*The Rev. WILLIAM MASON.*

DEAR SIR,

THE very favourable manner in which you spoke of some observations I shewed you in MS. several years ago, *on the lakes and mountains of the northern parts of England*\*, induced many of my friends at different times to desire the publication of them. But as they are illustrated by a great variety of drawings, the hazard and expence had rather a formidable appearance. A subscription was mentioned to me, and the late duchess dowager of Portland, with her usual generosity, sent me a hundred pounds as a subscription from herself: but I could not accept her grace's

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\* See Gray's Memoirs, p. 377.

kindness

kindness, as I was still afraid of *an engagement with the public.*

You advised me to make an essay in a smaller work of the same kind, which might enable me the better to ascertain the expences of a larger.—I have followed your advice, and have chosen the following little piece for that purpose, which was the first of the kind I ever amused myself with ; and as it is very unimportant in itself, you will excuse my endeavouring to give it some little credit by the following anecdote.

In the same year in which this journey was made, your late valuable friend Mr. Gray \*

\* Mr. Gray's account of this tour is contained in a letter, dated the 24th of May 1771.

“ My last summer's tour was through Worcestershire, “ Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Shrop- “ shire, five of the most beautiful counties in the kingdom. “ The very principal light, and capital feature of my journey, “ was the river Wye, which I descended in a boat for near “ forty miles from Ross to Chepstow. Its banks are a suc- “ cession of nameless beauties. One out of many you may “ see not ill-described by Mr. Whately, in his observations “ on gardening, under the name of the New-Weir. He has  
made

made it likewise, and hearing that I had put on paper a few remarks on the scenes which he had so lately visited, he desired a sight of them. They were then only in a rude state: but the handsome things he said of them to a friend \* of his, who obligingly repeated them to me, gave them some little degree of credit in my own opinion, and made me somewhat less apprehensive in risking them before the public.

If this little work afforded any amusement to Mr. Gray, it was the amusement of a very late period of his life. He saw it in London about the beginning of June 1771, and he

"also touched on two others, Tintern-Abbey and Persfield,  
 "both of them famous scenes, and both on the Wye. Mon-  
 "mouth, a town I never heard mentioned, lies on the same  
 "river in a vale that is the delight of my eyes, and the very  
 "seat of pleasure. The vale of Abergavenny, Ragland,  
 "and Chepstow-castles, Ludlow, Malvern-hills, &c. were  
 "the rest of my acquisitions, and no bad harvest in my op-  
 "nion: but I made no Journal myself, else you should have  
 "had it. I have indeed a short one, written by the com-  
 "panion of my travels, Mr. Nicholls, that serves to recal  
 "and fix the fleeting images of these things."

\* William Fraser, Esq. under-secretary of state.

died,

died, you know, at the end of the July following.

Had he lived, it is possible, he might have been induced to have assisted me with a few of his own remarks on scenes which he had so accurately examined. The slightest touches of such a master would have had their effect; no man was a greater admirer of nature than Mr. Gray, nor admired it with better taste.

I can only however offer this little work to the public as a hasty sketch. A country should be seen often to be seen correctly; it should be seen also in various seasons; different circumstances make such changes in the same landscape, as give it wholly a new aspect. But these scenes are marked just as they struck the eye at first; I had no opportunity to repeat the view.

For the drawings I must apologise in the same manner. They were hastily sketched, and under many disadvantages; and pretend at best to give only a general idea of a place or scene, without entering into the details of portrait.

I do

I do not myself thoroughly understand the process of working in aqua-tinta; but the great inconvenience of it seems to arise from its not being sufficiently under the artist's command. It is not always able to give that just *gradation* of light and shade, which he desires. Harsh edges will sometimes appear. It is however a very beautiful mode of multiplying drawings; and certainly comes nearer than any other to the softness of the pencil. It may indeed literally be called *drawing*; as it washes in the shades. The only difference is, that it is a more unmanageable process to wash the shades upon copper with aqua-fortis, than upon paper with a brush. If however the aqua-tinta method of multiplying drawings hath some inconveniences, it is no more than every other mode of working on copper is subject to—engraving, particularly, is always accompanied with a degree of stiffness.

For myself, I am most pleased with the free, rough style of etching landscape with a needle, after the manner of Rembrandt, in which much is left to the imagination to make out. But this would not satisfy the public; nor indeed any one, whose imagination is

( x )

not so conversant with the scenes of nature,  
as to make out a landscape from a hint.—  
This rough work hath, at least, the advantage  
of biting the copper more strongly, and giving  
a greater number of good impressions.

Believe me to be, dear sir, with great regard  
and esteem,

Your very sincere,

And affectionate

VICAR'S-HILL,  
*November 20, 1782.*

WILLIAM GILPIN.

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TRANSLATION  
OF  
*L A T I N Q U O T A T I O N S.*

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PAGE

39. ON the left of the river stood a lofty rock, as if hewn from the quarry, hanging over the precipice, haunted by birds of prey.
61. Perhaps you may introduce some trifling plant: but does this compensate for want of unity and simplicity in a whole?
79. Every man is at liberty to fill his glass to the height he chooses.
80. Glasses unequally filled.
102. Countries which have never known the plough are my delight—wild woods and rivers wandering through artless vales.
133. At first, when the vessel pushing from the shore, appeared surrounded by water, all was terror. The trembling animals urging each other on both sides from it, occasioned at first some confusion; but their

their fears subsiding gradually from the familiarity of the object, tranquillity took place.

151. A scene of wild brushwood.

151. Even then the awful genius of the place held the trembling rustic in awe. Even then he entered those gloomy woods, with superstitious fear. Some God, no doubt, (though what God is uncertain,) inhabits those sacred groves. The Arcadians often think they see Jove himself, flashing lightning from the clouds, when the louring storm comes forward over the lofty woods.

# OBSERVATIONS

ON THE  
*RIVER WYE, &c.*

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## SECTION I.

WE travel for various purposes—to explore the culture of soils, to view the curiosities of art, to survey the beauties of nature, and to learn the manners of men, their different politics and modes of life.

The following little work proposes a new object of pursuit; that of examining the face of a country *by the rules of picturesque beauty*; opening the sources of those pleasures which are derived from the comparison.

Observations of this kind, through the vehicle of description, have the better chance of being founded in truth, as they are not the

offspring of theory, but are taken immediately from the scenes of nature as they arise.

Crossing Hounslow-heath from Kingston in Surry, we struck into the Reading road ; and turned a little aside to see the approach to Caversham-house, which winds about a mile along a valley through the park. This was the work of Brown, whose great merit lay in pursuing the path which nature had marked out. Nothing can be easier than the sweep, better united than the ground, or more ornamental than several of the clumps ; but many of the single trees, which are beeches, are heavy, and offend the eye. Almost any ordinary tree may contribute to form a group. Its deformities are lost in a crowd ; nay, even the deformities of one tree may be corrected by the deformities of another. But few trees have those characters of beauty which will enable them to appear with advantage as individuals.\*

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\* This approach to Caversham-house, I have been informed, is now much injured.

From

From lord Cadogan's we took the Wallingford-road to Oxford. It affords some variety, running along the declivity of a range of hills; and overlooking one of the vallies of the Thames. But these scenes afford nothing very interesting. The Thames appears; but only in short reaches. It rarely exceeds the dimensions of a pool; and does not once, as I remember, exhibit those ample sweeps, in which the beauty of a river so much consists. The woods too are frequent; but they are formal copses: and white spots, bursting everywhere from a chalky soil, disturb the eye.

From Wallingford to Oxford, we did not observe one good view, except at Shillingford: where the bridge, the river, and its woody banks exhibit some scenery.

From Oxford we proposed to take the nearest road to Ross. As far as Witney, the country appears flat; though in fact it rises. About the eleventh stone the high grounds command a noble semicircular distance on the

left ; and near Burford there are views of the same kind on the right ; but not so extensive. None of these landscapes however are perfect, as they want the accompaniments of foregrounds.

At Mr. Lenthal's, in Burford, we admired a capital picture of the family of the Mores, which is said to be Holbein's ; and appeared to us entirely in that master's stile. But Mr. Walpole thinks it not an original ; and says he found a date upon it subsequent to the death of that master. It is however a good picture of its kind. It contains eleven figures—Sir Thomas More, and his father ; two young ladies, and other branches of the family. The heads are as expressive, as the composition is formal. The judge is marked with the character of a dry, facetious, sensible, old man. The chancellor is handed down to us in history, both as a cheerful philosopher, and as a severe inquisitor. His countenance here has much of that eagerness and stern attention which remind us of the latter. The subject of this piece seems to be a dispute between the two young ladies ; and alludes

alludes probably to some well-known family-story.

Indeed every family-picture should be founded on some little story or domestic incident, which, in a degree, should engage the attention of all the figures. It would be invidious perhaps to tax Vandyck on this head ; otherwise I could mention some of his family-pictures, which, if the sweetness of his colouring and the elegant simplicity of his airs and attitudes did not screen his faults, would appear only like so many distinct portraits stuck together on the same canvas. It would be equally invidious to omit mentioning a modern master, now at the head of his profession\*, whose great fertility of invention in *employing* the figures of his family-pictures, is not among the least of his many excellences.

The country from Burford is high, and downy. A valley, on the right, kept pace with us ; through which flows the Windrush ; not indeed an object of sight, but easily traced

\* Sir Joshua Reynolds.

along

along the meadows by pollard-willows, and a more luxuriant vegetation.

At Barrington we had a pleasant view, through an opening on the foreground.

About North-leach the road grows very disagreeable. Nothing appears but downs on each side; and these often divided by stone-walls, the most offensive separation of property.

From the neighbourhood of London we had now pursued our journey through a tract of country almost uniformly rising, though by imperceptible degrees, into the heart of Gloucestershire ; till at length we found ourselves on the ridge of Coteswold.

The county of Gloucester is divided into three capital parts; the Wolds, or high downy grounds towards the east, the vale of Severn in the middle, and the forest of Dean towards the west. The first of these tracts of country we had been traversing from our entrance

entrance into Gloucestershire ; and the ridge we now stood on made the extremity of it. Here the heights which we had been ascending by imperceptible degrees, at length broke down abruptly into the lower grounds ; and a vast stretch of distant country appeared at once before the eye.

I know not that I was ever more struck with the singularity and grandeur of any landscape. Nature generally brings several countries together in some easy mode of connection. If she raise the grounds on one side by a long ascent, she commonly unites them with the country on the other in the same easy manner. Such scenes we view without wonder or emotion. We glide without observation from the near grounds into the more distant. All is gradual and easy. But when nature works in the bold and singular stile of composition in which she works here ; when she raises a country through a progress of a hundred miles, and then breaks it down at once by an abrupt precipice into an expansive vale, we are immediately struck with the novelty and grandeur of the scene.

It was the vale of Severn which was spread before us. Perhaps nowhere in England a distance so rich, and at the same time so extensive, can be found. We had a view of it almost from one end to the other, as it wound through the space of many leagues in a direction nearly from west to north. The eye was lost in the profusion of objects which were thrown at once before it, and ran wild over the vast expanse with rapture and astonishment, before it could compose itself enough to make any coherent observations.-- At length we began to examine the detail, and to separate the vast immensity before us into parts.

To the north, we looked up the vale along the course of the Severn. The town of Cheltenham lay beneath our feet, then at the distance of two or three miles. The vale appeared afterwards confined between Bredon hills on the right, and those of Malvern on the left. Right between these in the middle of the vale, lay Tewksbury, bosomed in wood : the great church, even at this distance, made a respectable appearance. A little to the right, but in distance very remote, we might see the

the towers of Worcester, if the day were clear ; especially if some accidental gleam of light relieved them from the hills of Shropshire, which close the scene.

To the west, we looked toward Gloucester. And here it is remarkable, that as the objects in the northern part of the vale are confined by the hills of Malvern and Bredon ; so in this view the vale is confined by two other hills, which, though inconsiderable in themselves, give a character to the scene ; and the more so as they are both insulated. One of these hills is known by the name of Robin's-wood ; the other by that of Churchdown, from the singularity of a church seated on its eminence. Between these hills the great object of the vale is the city of Gloucester, which appeared rising over rich woody scenes. Beyond Gloucester the eye still pursued the vale into remote distance, till it united with a range of mountains.

Still more to the west, arose a distant forest-view, composed of the woods of the country uniting with the forest of Dean. Of this view the principal feature is the mouth of the Severn, where it first begins to assume a character of grandeur by mixing with the ocean.

We

We see only a small portion of it stretching in an acute angle over a range of wood. But an eye, used to perspective, seeing such a body of water, small as it appears, wearing any *determined form* at such a distance, gives it credit for its full magnitude. The Welch mountains also, which rise beyond the Severn, contributed to raise the idea; for by forming an even horizontal line along the edge of the water, they gave it the appearance of what it really is, an arm of the sea.

Having thus taken a view of the vast expanse of the vale of Severn from the extremity of the descent of Coteswold, we had leisure next to examine the grandeur of the descent itself; which forms a foreground not less admirable than the distance. The lofty ridge on which we stood is of great extent; stretching beyond the bounds of Gloucestershire, both towards the north and towards the south. It is not everywhere, we may suppose, of equal beauty, height, and abruptness: but fine passages of landscape, I have been told, abound in every part of it. The spot where we took this view over the vale  
of

of Severn, is the high ground on Crickley-hill; which is a promontory standing out in the vale between the villages of Leckhampton and Birdlip. Here the descent consists of various rocky knolls, prominences, and abruptnesses; among which a variety of roads wind down the steep towards different parts of the vale; and each of these roads, through its whole varying progress, exhibits some beautiful view; discovering the vale, either in whole or in part, with every advantage of a picturesque foreground.

Many of these precipices also are finely wooded. Some of the largest trees in the kingdom, perhaps, are to be seen in these parts. The Cheltenham oak, and an elm not far from it, are trees, which curious travellers always inquire after.

Many of these hills, which inclose the vale of Severn on this side, furnish landscapes themselves, without borrowing assistance from the vale. The woody vallies, which run winding among them, present many pleasing pastoral scenes. The cloathing country about Stroud, is particularly diversified in this way: though many of these vallies are greatly injured in a picturesque light, by introducing

scenes

scenes of habitation and industry. A cottage, a mill, or a hamlet among trees, may often add beauty to a rural scene: but when houses are scattered through every part, the moral sense can never make a convert of the picturesque eye. Stroud-water valley especially, which is one of the most beautiful of these scenes, has been deformed lately not only by a number of buildings, but by a canal cut through the middle of it.

Among the curiosities of these high grounds, is the seven-well-head of the Thames. In a glen near the road, a few limpid springs, gushing from a rock, give origin to this noblest of English rivers; though I suppose several little streams in that district might claim the honour with equal justice, if they could bring over the public opinion.

Nothing can give a stronger idea of the nature of the country I have been describing, than this circumstance of its giving rise to the Thames. On one side, within half a dozen miles below the precipice, the Severn has arrived at so much consequence, as to take its level from the tides of the ocean; on the other, the Thames arising at our feet, does

does not arrive at that dignity, till it have performed a course of two hundred and fifty miles.

Having descended the heights of Crickley, the road through the vale continues so level to Gloucester, that we scarcely saw the town till we entered it.

The cathedral is of elegant Gothic on the outside, but of heavy Saxon within ; that is, these different modes of architecture *prevail most* in these different parts of the building : for in fact, the cathedral of Gloucester is a compound of all the several modes which have prevailed from the days of Henry the second to those of Henry the seventh, and may be said to include, in one part or other, the whole history of sacred architecture during that period. Many parts of it have been built in the times of the purest Gothic ; and others, which have been originally Saxon, appear plainly to have been altered into the Gothic ; which was no uncommon practice. A Grecian screen is injudiciously introduced to separate the choir. The cloisters are light and airy.

As we leave the gates of Gloucester, the view is pleasing. A long stretch of meadow, filled with cattle, spreads into a foreground. Beyond, is a screen of wood, terminated by distant mountains; among which Malvern-hills make a respectable appearance. The road to Ross leads through a country, woody, rough, hilly, and picturesque.

Ross stands high, and commands many distant views; but that from the church-yard is the most admired, and is indeed very amusing. It consists of an easy sweep of the Wye, and of an extensive country beyond it. But it is not picturesque. It is marked by no characteristic objects: it is broken into too many parts; and it is seen from too high a point. The spire of the church, which is the man of Ross's *heaven-directed spire*, tapers beautifully. The inn, which was the house he lived in, is known by the name of the *man of Ross's house*.

At

At Ross we planned our voyage down the Wye to Monmouth ; and provided a covered boat, navigated by three men. Less strength would have carried us down ; but the labour is in rowing back.



## SECTION II.

THE WYE takes its rise near the summit of Plinlimmon, and, dividing the counties of Radnor and Brecon, passes through the middle of Herefordshire: it then becomes a second boundary between Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire, and falls into the Severn a little below Chepstow. To this place from Ross, which is a course of near forty miles, it flows in a gentle, uninterrupted stream; and adorns, through its various reaches, a succession of the most picturesque scenes.

The beauty of these scenes arises chiefly from two circumstances; the *lofty banks* of the river, and its *mazy course*: both which are accurately observed by the poet, when he describes the Wye as *echoing* through its *winding bounds*\*. It could not well *echo*,

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\* Pleas'd Vaga echoes thro' its winding bounds,  
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.

POPE's Eth. Ep.

C

unless

unless its banks were both *lofty* and *winding*.

From these two circumstances, the views it exhibits are of the most beautiful kind of perspective, free from the formality of lines.

The most perfect river-views, thus circumstanced, are composed of four grand parts : the *area*, which is the river itself; the *two side-screens*, which are the opposite banks, and lead the perspective ; and the *front-screen*, which points out the winding of the river.

If the Wye ran, like a Dutch canal, between parallel banks, there could be no front-screen : the two side screens, in that situation, would lengthen to a point.

If a road were under the circumstance of a river winding like the Wye, the effect would be the same. But this is rarely the case. The road pursues the irregularity of the country. It climbs the hill, and sinks into the valley ; and this, irregularity gives each view it exhibits a different character.

The views on the Wye, though composed only of these *simple parts*, are yet *exceedingly varied*.

They are varied, first, by the *contrast of the screens*: sometimes one of the side-screens is elevated, sometimes the other, and sometimes the front; or both the side-screens may be lofty, and the front either high or low.

Again, they are varied by the *folding of the side-screens over each other*; and hiding more or less of the front. When none of the front is discovered, the folding side either winds round, like an \* amphitheatre, or it becomes a long reach of perspective.

These *simple* variations admit still farther variety from becoming *complex*. One of the sides may be compounded of various parts, while the other remains simple; or both may be compounded, and the front simple; or the front alone may be compounded.

\* The word *amphitheatre*, strictly speaking, is a complete inclosure; but, I believe, it is commonly accepted, as here, for any circular piece of architecture, though it do not wind *entirely* round.

Besides these sources of variety, there are other circumstances, which, under the name of *ornaments*, still farther increase them. *Plain* banks will admit all the variations we have yet mentioned; but when this *plainness* is *adorned*, a thousand other varieties arise.

The *ornaments* of the Wye may be ranged under four heads: *ground*, *wood*, *rocks*, and *buildings*.

The *ground*, of which the banks of the Wye consist, (and which have thus far been considered only in its *general effect*,) affords every variety which ground is capable of receiving; from the steepest precipice to the flattest meadow. This variety appears in the line formed by the summits of the banks; in the swellings and excavations of their declivities; and in their indentations at the bottom, as they unite with the water.

In many places also the ground is *broken*; which adds new sources of variety. By *broken ground*, we mean only such ground as hath





hath lost its turf, and discovers the naked soil. We often see a gravelly earth shivering from the hills, in the form of water-falls: often dry, stony channels, guttering down precipices, the rough beds of temporary torrents; and sometimes so trifling a cause as the rubbing of sheep against the sides of little banks or hillocks, will occasion very beautiful breaks.

The *colour* too of the broken soil is a great source of variety; the yellow or the red oker, the ashy grey, the black earth, or the marly blue: and the intermixtures of these with each other, and with patches of verdure, blooming heath, and other vegetable tints, still increase that variety.

Nor let the fastidious reader think these remarks descend too much in detail. Were an extensive distance described, a forest-scene, a sea-coast view, a vast semicircular range of mountains, or some other grand display of nature, it would be trifling to mark these minute circumstances. But here the hills around exhibit little except *foregrounds*; and it is necessary, where we have no distances, to be more exact in finishing objects at hand.

The

The next great ornament on the banks of the Wye are its *woods*. In this country are many works carried on by fire; and the woods being maintained for their use, are periodically cut down. As the larger trees are generally left, a kind of alternacy takes place: what is this year a thicket, may the next be an open grove. The woods themselves possess little beauty, and less grandeur; yet, as we consider them merely as the *ornamental* parts of a scene, the eye will not examine them with exactness, but compound for a *general effect*.

One circumstance attending this alternacy is pleasing. Many of the furnaces on the banks of the river consume charcoal, which is manufactured on the spot; and the smoke issuing from the sides of the hills, and spreading its thin veil over a part of them, beautifully breaks their lines, and unites them with the sky.

The chief deficiency, in point of wood, is of large trees on the *edge of the water*; which, clumped here and there, would diversify the hills as the eye passes them; and

remove

remove that heaviness which always, in some degree, (though here as little as anywhere,) arises from the continuity of ground. They would also give a degree of distance to the more removed parts ; which in a scene like this, would be attended with peculiar advantage : for as we have here so little distance, we wish to make the most of what we have.— But trees *immediately on the foreground* cannot be suffered in these scenes, as they would obstruct the navigation of the river.

The *rocks*, which are continually starting through the woods, produce another *ornament* on the banks of the Wye. The rock, as all other objects, though more than all, receives its chief beauty from contrast. Some objects are beautiful in themselves. The eye is pleased with the tuftings of a tree: it is amused with pursuing the eddying stream ; or it rests with delight on the broken arches of a Gothic ruin. Such objects, independent of composition, are beautiful in themselves. But the rock, bleak, naked, and unadorned, seems scarcely to deserve a place among them. Tint it with mosses and lychens of various hues

hues, and you give it a degree of beauty. Adorn it with shrubs and hanging herbage, and you make it still more picturesque. Connect it with wood, and water, and broken ground, and you make it in the highest degree interesting. Its *colour* and its *form* are so accommodating, that it generally blends into one of the most beautiful appendages of landscape.

Different kind of rocks have different degrees of beauty. Those on the Wye, which are of a greyish colour, are in general simple and grand; rarely formal or fantastic. Sometimes they project in those beautiful square masses, yet broken and shattered in every line, which is characteristic of the most majestic species of rock. Sometimes they slant obliquely from the eye in shelving diagonal strata: and sometimes they appear in large masses of smooth stone, detached from each other, and half buried in the soil. Rocks of this last kind are the most lumpish, and the least picturesque.

The various *buildings* which arise everywhere on the banks of the Wye, form the last

last of its *ornaments* : abbeys, castles, villages, spires, forges, mills, and bridges. One or other of these venerable vestiges of past, or cheerful habitations of present times, characterize almost every scene.

These *works of art* are, however, of much greater use in *artificial* than in *natural* landscape. In pursuing the beauties of nature, we range at large among forests, lakes, rocks, and mountains. The various scenes we meet with, furnish an inexhausted source of pleasure : and though the works of art may often give animation and contrast to these scenes, yet still they are not necessary : we can be amused without them. But when we introduce a scene on canvass ; when the eye is to be confined within the frame of a picture, and can no longer range among the varieties of nature, the aids of art become more important ; and we want the castle or the abbey, to give consequence to the scene. Indeed the landscape-painter seldom thinks his view perfect without characterizing it by some object of this kind.



## SECTION III.

HAVING thus analyzed the Wye, and considered separately its constituent parts ; the *steepness* of its banks, its *mazy* course, the *grounds, woods* and *rocks*, which are its native ornaments ; and the *buildings*, which still further adorn its natural beauties ; we shall now take a view of some of those pleasing scenes which result from the *combination* of all these picturesque materials.

I must, however, premise how ill-qualified I am to do justice to the banks of the Wye, were it only from having seen them under the circumstance of a continued rain, which began early in the day, before one third of our voyage was performed.

It is true, scenery *at hand* suffers less under such a circumstance, than scenery at a *distance*, which it totally obscures.

The

The picturesque eye also, in quest of beauty, finds it almost in every incident and under every appearance of nature. Even the rain gave a gloomy grandeur to many of the scenes ; and by throwing a veil of obscurity over the removed banks of the river, introduced, now and then, something like a pleasing distance. Yet still it hid greater beauties ; and we could not help regretting the loss of those broad lights and deep shadows which would have given so much lustre to the whole, and which ground like this is in a peculiar manner adapted to receive.

The first part of the river from Ross is tame. The banks are low ; and scarcely an object attracts the eye, except the ruins of *Wilton-castle*, which appear on the left, shrouded with a few trees. But the scene wants accompaniments to give it grandeur.

The bank, however, soon began to swell on the right, and was richly adorned with wood. We admired it much ; and also the  
vivid





vivid images reflected from the water, which were continually disturbed as we sailed past them, and thrown into tremulous confusion by the dashing of our oars. A disturbed surface of water endeavouring to collect its scattered images and restore them to order, is among the *pretty* appearances of nature.

We met with nothing for some time during our voyage but these grand woody banks, one rising behind another; appearing and vanishing by turns, as we doubled the several capes. But though no particular objects characterized these different scenes, yet they afforded great variety of pleasing views, both as we wound round the several promontories, which discovered new beauties as each scene opened, and when we kept the same scene a longer time in view, stretching along some lengthened reach, where the river is formed into an irregular vista by hills shooting out beyond each other, and going off in perspective.

The channel of no river can be more decisively marked than that of the Wye. *Who hath divided a water-course for the flowing of rivers?* saith the Almighty in that grand apostrophe to Job on the works of creation. The idea is happily illustrated here. A nobler *water-course* was never *divided* for any river than this of the Wye. Rivers, in general, pursue a devious course along the countries through which they flow; and form channels for themselves by constant fluxion. But sometimes, as in these scenes, we see a channel marked with such precision, that it appears as if originally intended only for the bed of a river.

After sailing four miles from Ross, we came to *Goodrich-castle*; where a grand view presented itself; and we rested on our oars to examine it. A reach of the river, forming a noble bay, is spread before the eye. The bank, on the right, is steep, and covered with wood; beyond which a bold promontory shoots out, crowned with a castle, rising among trees.

This





This view, which is one of the grandest on the river, I should not scruple to call *correctly picturesque*; which is seldom the character of a purely natural scene.

Nature is always great in design. She is an admirable colourist also; and harmonizes tints with infinite variety and beauty: but she is seldom so correct in composition, as to produce an harmonious whole. Either the foreground or the background is disproportioned; or some awkward line runs across the piece; or a tree is ill-placed; or a bank is formal; or something or other is not exactly what it should be. The case is, the immensity of nature is beyond human comprehension. She works on a *vast scale*; and, no doubt harmoniously, if her schemes could be comprehended. The artist, in the mean time, is confined to a *span*; and lays down his little rules, which he calls the *principles of picturesque beauty*, merely to adapt such diminutive parts of nature's surfaces to his own eye as come within its scope.—Hence, therefore, the painter who adheres strictly to the *composition* of nature, will rarely make a good picture. His picture must contain a *whole*; his archetype is but a *part*. In general,

general, however, he may obtain views of such parts of nature, as with the addition of a few trees or a little alteration in the foreground, (which is a liberty that must always be allowed,) may be adapted to his rules ; though he is rarely so fortunate as to find a landscape so completely satisfactory to him. In the scenery indeed at Goodrich-castle the parts are few ; and the whole is a simple exhibition. The complex scenes of nature are generally those which the artist finds most refractory to his rules of composition.

In following the course of the Wye, which makes here one of its boldest sweeps, we were carried almost round the castle, surveying it in a variety of forms. Some of these prospects are good ; but, in general, the castle loses, on this side, both its own dignity and the dignity of its situation.

The views *from* the castle were mentioned to us as worth examining ; but the rain was now set in, and would not permit us to land.

As we leave *Goodrich-castle*, the banks on the left, which had hitherto contributed less to entertain us, began now principally to attract our attention, rearing themselves gradually into grand steeps; sometimes covered with thick woods, and sometimes forming vast concave slopes of mere verdure; unadorned, except here and there, by a straggling tree; while the sheep which hang browsing upon them, seen from the bottom, were diminished into white specks.

The view at *Rure-dean-church* unfolds itself next; which is a scene of great grandeur. Here both sides of the river are steep, and both woody; but in one the woods are intermixed with rocks. The deep umbrage of the forest of Dean occupies the front; and the spire of the church rises among the trees. The reach of the river which exhibits this scene is long; and, of course, the view, which is a noble piece of natural perspective, continues some time before the eye: but

when the spire comes directly in front, the grandeur of the landscape is gone.

The *stone-quarries* on the right, from which Bristol-bridge was built, and on the left the furnaces of *Bishop's-wood*, vary the scene; though they are objects of no great importance in themselves.

For some time both sides of the river continue steep and beautiful. No particular circumstance indeed characterizes either: but in such exhibitions as these nature characterizes her own scenes. We admire the infinite *variety* with which she *shapes* and *adorns* these vast concave and convex forms. We admire also that *varied touch* with which she expresses every object.

Here we see one great distinction between *her* painting and that of all her *copyists*. Artists universally are *mannerists* in a certain degree. Each has his particular mode of forming

forming particular objects. His rocks, his trees, his figures, are cast in one mould ; at least they possess only a *varied sameness*. The figures of Rubens are all full-fed ; those of Salvator spare and long-legged : but nature has a different mould for every object she presents.

The artist again discovers as little variety in filling up the surfaces of bodies, as he does in delineating their forms. You see the same *touch*, or something like it, universally prevail ; though applied to different subjects. But nature's touch is as much varied as the form of her objects.

In every part of painting except execution, an artist may be assisted by the labours of those who have gone before him. He may improve his skill in composition, in light and shade, in perspective, in grace and elegance ; that is, in all the scientific parts of his art. But with regard to *execution*, he must set up on his own stock. A *mannerist*, I fear, he must be. If he get a manner of his own, he *may* be an agreeable mannerist ; but if he copy another's, he *will certainly* be a formal one. The more closely he copies the detail

of nature, the better chance he has of being free from this general defect.

At *Lidbroke* is a large wharf, where coals are shipped for Hereford and other places. Here the scene is new and pleasing. All has thus far been grandeur and tranquillity. It continues so yet; but mixed with life and bustle. A road runs diagonally along the bank; and horses and carts appear passing to the small vessels which lie against the wharf to receive their burdens. Close behind a rich woody hill hangs sloping over the wharf, and forms a grand back-ground to the whole. The contrast of all this business, the engines used in lading and unlading, together with the variety of the scene, produce all together a picturesque assemblage. The sloping hill is the front-screen; the two side-screens are low.

But soon the front becomes a lofty side-screen on the left; and sweeping round the eye at *Welsh-Bickner*, forms a noble amphitheatre.

At

At *Cold-well* the front-screen first appears as a woody hill, swelling to a point. In a few minutes, it changes its shape, and the woody hill becomes a lofty side-screen on the right; while the front unfolds itself into a majestic piece of rock-scenery.

Here we should have gone on shore and walked to the *New-Weir*, which by land is only a mile; though, by water, I believe, it is three. This walk would have afforded us, we were informed, some very noble river-views: nor should we have lost any thing by relinquishing the water, which in this part was uninteresting.

The whole of this information we should probably have found true, if the weather had permitted us to profit by it. The latter part of it was certainly well founded; for the water-views in this part were very tame. We left the rocks and precipices behind, exchanging them for low banks and sedges.

But

But the grand scenery soon returned. We approached it, however, gradually. The views at *White-church* were an introduction to it. Here we sailed through a long reach of hills, whose sloping sides were covered with large, lumpish, detached stones ; which seemed, in a course of years, to have rolled from a girdle of rocks that surrounds the upper regions of these high grounds on both sides of the river ; but particularly on the left.

From these rocks we soon approached the *New-Weir*, which may be called the second grand scene on the Wye.

The river is wider than usual in this part ; and takes a sweep round a towering promontory of rock ; which forms the side-screen on the left, and is the grand feature of the view. It is not a broad fractured face of rock ; but rather a woody hill, from which large rocky projections, in two or three places, burst out ; rudely hung with twisting branches and shaggy furniture, which, like mane round the lion's head, give a more savage

savage air to these wild exhibitions of nature. Near the top a pointed fragment of solitary rock, rising above the rest, has rather a fantastic appearance ; but it is not without its effect in marking the scene.—A great master in landscape has adorned an imaginary view with a circumstance exactly similar :

“ Stabat acuta silex, præcisis undiq ; saxis,  
 “ ——— dorso insurgens, altissima visu,  
 “ Dirarum nidis domus opportuna volucrum,  
 “ ——— prona jugo, lævum incumbebat ad amnem.”

*Æn. VIII. 233.*

But the most wonderful appearance of this kind I ever met with, is to be found in the 249th page of Mr. Anderson's Narrative of the British Embassy to China ; where he tells us, that in Tartary, beyond the wall, he saw a solitary rock of this kind, which rose from the summit of a mountain at least one hundred feet. Its base was somewhat smaller than its superstructure ; and, what was very extraordinary, several streams of water issued from it.

On the right side of the Wye, opposite the rock we have just described, the bank

forms a woody amphitheatre, following the course of the stream round the promontory. Its lower skirts are adorned with a hamlet; in the midst of which, volumes of thick smoke, thrown up at intervals from an iron forge, as its fires receive fresh fuel, add double grandeur to the scene.

But what peculiarly marks this view, is a circumstance on the water. The whole river at this place makes a precipitate fall; of no great height indeed, but enough to merit the name of a cascade; though to the eye, above the stream, it is an object of no consequence. In all the scenes we had yet passed, the water, moving with a slow and solemn pace, the objects around kept time, as it were, with it; and every steep and every rock which hung over the river, was awful, tranquil, and majestic. But here the violence of the stream and the roaring of the waters impressed a new character on the scene: all was agitation and uproar; and every steep and every rock stared with wildness and terror.





A kind of fishing-boat is used in this part of the river, which is curious. It is constructed of waxed canvas stretched over a few slight ribs, and holds only a single man. It is called a *coricle*; and is derived, probably, as its name imports, from that species of ancient boat which was formed of *leather*.

An adventurous fellow, for a wager, once navigated a *coricle* as far as the isle of Lundy, at the mouth of the Bristol-channel. A full fortnight, or more, he spent in this dangerous voyage; and it was happy for him that it was a fortnight of serene weather. Many a current and many an eddy; many a flowing tide, and many an ebbing one, afforded him occasion to exert all his skill and dexterity. Sometimes his little bark was carried far to leeward, and sometimes as far to windward; but still he recovered his course; persevered in his undertaking; and at length happily achieved it. When he returned to the *New-Weir*, report says, the account of his expedition was received like a voyage round the world.

Below

Below the *New-Weir* are other rocky views of the same kind, though less beautiful. But description flags in running over such a monotony of terms. *High, low, steep, woody, rocky,* and a few others, are all the colours of language we have to describe scenes in which there are infinite gradations, and, amidst some general sameness, infinite peculiarities.

After we had passed a few of these scenes, the hills gradually descend into Monmouth, which lies too low to make any appearance from the water; but on landing, we found it a pleasant town, and neatly built. The town-house and church are both handsome.

The transmutations of time are often ludicrous. Monmouth-castle was formerly the palace of a king, and birth-place of a mighty prince: it is now converted into a yard for fatting ducks.

The

The sun had set before we arrived at Monmouth. Here we met our chaise; but, on inquiry, finding a voyage more likely to produce amusement than a journey, we made a new agreement with our bargemen, and embarked again the next morning.



## SECTION IV.

As we left Monmouth, the banks on the left were at first low; but on both sides they soon grew steep and woody; varying their shapes as they had done the day before. The most beautiful of these scenes is in the neighbourhood of St. Breval's castle; where the vast woody declivities on each hand are uncommonly magnificent. The castle is at too great a distance to make any object in the view.

The weather was now serene; the sun shone; and we saw enough of the effect of light in the exhibitions of this day, to regret the want of it the day before.

During the whole course of our voyage from Ross, we had scarcely seen one corn-field. The banks of the Wye consist almost entirely

entirely either of wood or of pasturage ; which I mention as a circumstance of peculiar value in landscape. Furrowed-lands and waving-corn, however charming in pastoral poetry, are ill accommodated to painting. The painter never desires the hand of art to touch his grounds.—But if art *must* stray among them ; if it *must* mark out the limits of property, and turn them to the uses of agriculture, he wishes that these limits may, as much as possible, be concealed ; and that the lands they circumscribe may approach as nearly as may be to nature ; that is, that they may be pasturage. Pasturage not only presents an agreeable surface ; but the cattle which graze it add great variety and animation to the scene.

The meadows below Monmouth, which ran shelving from the hills to the water-side, were particularly beautiful and well inhabited.—Flocks of sheep were everywhere hanging on their green steeps ; and herds of cattle occupying the lower grounds. We often sailed past groups of them laving their sides in the water ; or retiring from the heat under sheltered banks.

In





In this part of the river also, which now begins to widen, we were often entertained with light vessels gliding past us. Their white sails passing along the sides of woodland hills were very picturesque.

In many places also the views were varied by the prospect of bays and harbours in miniature, where little barks lay moored, taking in ore and other commodities from the mountains. These vessels, designed plainly for rougher water than they at present encountered, shewed us, without any geographical knowledge, that we approached the sea.

From Monmouth we reached, by a late breakfast-hour, the noble ruin of *Tintern-abby*, which belongs to the Duke of Beaufort; and is esteemed, with its appendages, the most beautiful and picturesque view on the river.

Castles and abbeys have different situations, agreeable to their respective uses. The castle, meant

meant for defence, stands boldly on the hill ;  
the abbey, intended for meditation, is hid in  
the sequestered vale.

*Ah ! happy thou, if one superior rock  
Bear on its brow the shivered fragment huge  
Of some old Norman fortress : happier far,  
Ah ! then most happy, if thy vale below  
Wash, with the crystal coolness of its rills,  
Some mould'ring abbey's ivy-vested wall.*

Such is the situation of *Tintern-abby*. It occupies a great eminence in the middle of a circular valley, beautifully screened on all sides by woody hills, through which the river winds its course ; and the hills, closing on its entrance and on its exit, leave no room for inclement blasts to enter. A more pleasing retreat could not easily be found. The woods and glades intermixed ; the winding of the river ; the variety of the ground ; the splendid ruin, contrasted with the objects of nature ; and the elegant line formed by the summits of the hills which include the whole, make all together a very enchanting piece of scenery. Every thing around bears an air so calm and tranquil, so sequestered from the commerce of life, that it is easy to conceive, a

man





man of warm imagination, in monkish times, might have been allured by such a scene to become an inhabitant of it.

No part of the ruins of Tintern is seen from the river except the abbey-church. It has been an elegant Gothic pile ; but it does not make that appearance as a *distant* object which we expected. Though the parts are beautiful, the whole is ill-shaped. No ruins of the tower are left, which might give form and contrast to the buttresses and walls. Instead of this a number of gabel-ends hurt the eye with their regularity, and disgust it by the vulgarity of their shape. A mallet judiciously used (but who durst use it ?) might be of service in fracturing some of them ; particularly those of the cross isles, which are both disagreeable in themselves, and confound the perspective.

But were the building ever so beautiful, encompassed as it is with shabby houses, it could make no appearance from the river. From a stand near the road it is seen to more advantage.

But if *Tintern-abbey* be less striking as a *distant* object, it exhibits, on a *nearer* view, (when the whole together cannot be seen,) a very

a very enchanting piece of ruin. The eye settles upon some of its nobler parts. Nature has now made it her own. Time has worn off all traces of the chisel: it has blunted the sharp edges of the rule and compass, and broken the regularity of opposing parts. The figured ornaments of the east-window are gone; those of the west-window are left. Most of the other windows, with their principal ornaments, remain.

To these were superadded the ornaments of time. Ivy, in masses uncommonly large, had taken possession of many parts of the wall; and given a happy contrast to the grey-coloured stone of which the building is composed: nor was this undecorated. Mosses of various hues, with lychens, maiden-hair, penny-leaf, and other humble plants, had over-spread the surface, or hung from every joint or crevice. Some of them were in flower, others only in leaf; but all together gave those full-blown tints which add the richest finishing to a ruin.

Such is the beautiful appearance which Tintern-abby exhibits on the *outside*, in those parts where we can obtain a nearer view of it. But when we *enter it* we see it in most perfection;

perfection ; at least if we consider it as an independent object, unconnected with landscape. The roof is gone ; but the walls, and pillars, and abutments which supported it are entire. A few of the pillars indeed have given way ; and here and there a piece of the facing of the wall ; but in corresponding parts one always remains to tell the story. The pavement is obliterated : the elevation of the choir is no longer visible : the whole area is reduced to one level, cleared of rubbish, and covered with neat turf, closely shorn ; and interrupted with nothing but the noble columns which formed the isles and supported the tower.

When we stood at one end of this awful piece of ruin, and surveyed the whole in one view, the elements of air and earth, its only covering and pavement ; and the grand and venerable remains which terminated both ; perfect enough to form the perspective, yet broken enough to destroy the regularity ; the eye was above measure delighted with the beauty, the greatness, and the novelty of the scene. More *picturesque* it certainly would have been, if the area, unadorned, had been left with all its rough fragments of ruin

scattered round ; and bold was the hand that removed them : yet as the outside of the ruin, which is the chief object of *picturesque curiosity*, is still left in all its wild and native rudeness, we excuse, perhaps we approve, the neatness that is introduced within : it *may* add to the *beauty* of the scene ; to its *novelty* it undoubtedly *does*.

Among other things in this scene of desolation, the poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants were remarkable. They occupy little huts, raised among the ruins of the monastery, and seem to have no employment but begging ; as if a place once devoted to indolence could never again become the seat of industry. As we left the abbey, we found the whole hamlet at the gate, either openly soliciting alms, or covertly, under the pretence of carrying us to some part of the ruins, which each could shew, and which was far superior to anything which could be shewn by any one else. The most lucrative occasion could not have excited more jealousy and contention.

One poor woman we followed, who had engaged to shew us the monks' library. She could scarcely crawl; shuffling along her palsied lambs and meagre contracted body by the help of two sticks. She led us through an old gate into a place overspread with nettles and briars; and pointing to the remnant of a shattered cloister, told us that was the place. It was her own mansion. All indeed she meant to tell us was the story of her own wretchedness; and all she had to shew us, was her own miserable habitation. We did not expect to be interested as we were. I never saw so loathsome a human dwelling. It was a cavern loftily vaulted between two ruined walls, which streamed with various coloured stains of unwholesome dews. The floor was earth; yielding through moisture to the tread. Not the merest utensil or furniture of any kind appeared, but a wretched bedstead, spread with a few rags, and drawn into the middle of the cell to prevent its receiving the damp which trickled down the walls. At one end was an aperture, which served just to let in light enough to discover the wretchedness within.

—When we stood in the midst of this cell  
of

of misery, and felt the chilling damps which struck us in every direction, we were rather surprised that the wretched inhabitant was still alive, than that she had only lost the use of her limbs.

The country about *Tintern-abby* hath been described as a solitary tranquil silence; but its immediate environs only are meant.— Within half a mile of it are carried on great iron-works, which introduce noise and bustle into these regions of tranquillity.

The ground about these works appears from the river to consist of grand woody hills, sweeping and intersecting each other in elegant lines. They are a continuation of the same kind of landscape as that about *Tintern-abby*, and are fully equal to it.

As we still descend the river, the same scenery continues: the banks are equally steep, winding, and woody; and in some parts diversified by prominent rocks, and ground finely broken and adorned.

But

But one great disadvantage began here to invade us. Hitherto the river had been clear and splendid ; reflecting the several objects on its banks. But its waters now became ouzy and discoloured. Sludgy shores too appeared on each side ; and other symptoms which discovered the influence of a tide.



## SECTION V.

MR. MORRIS's improvements at Persfield, which we soon approached, are generally thought as much worth a traveller's notice as any thing on the banks of the Wye. We pushed on shore close under his rocks; and the tide being at ebb, we landed with some difficulty on an ouzy beach. One of our bargemen, who knew the place, served as a guide; and under his conduct we climbed the steep by an easy regular zig-zag.

The eminence on which we stood (one of those grand eminences which overlooks the Wye) is an intermixture of rock and wood, and forms, in this place, a concave semicircle, sweeping round in a segment of two miles. The river winds under it; and the scenery, of course, is shewn in various directions. The river itself, indeed, as we just observed, is charged with the impurities of the soil it washes; and when it ebbs its verdant banks become slopes of mud: but if

if we except these disadvantages, the situation of Persfield is noble.

Little indeed was left for improvement, but to open walks and views through the woods to the various objects around them ; to those chiefly of the eminence on which we stood. All this the ingenious proprietor hath done with great judgment ; and hath shewn his rocks, his woods, and his precipices, under various forms, and to great advantage. Sometimes a broad face of rock is presented, stretching along a vast space, like the walls of a citadel. Sometimes it is broken by intervening trees. In other parts the rocks rise above the woods ; a little farther they sink below them ; sometimes they are seen through them ; and sometimes one series of rocks appears rising above another : and though many of these objects are repeatedly seen, yet seen from different stations, and with new accompaniments, they appear new. The winding of the precipice is the magical secret by which all these enchanting scenes are produced.

We cannot, however, call these views picturesque. They are either presented from too high a point, or they have little to mark them

them as characteristic ; or they do not fall into such composition as would appear to advantage on canvas. But they are extremely romantic, and give a loose to the most pleasing riot of imagination.

These views are chiefly shewn from different stands in a close walk carried along the brow of the precipice. It would be invurious, perhaps, to remark a degree of tediousness in this walk, and too much sameness in many of its parts ; notwithstanding the general variety which enlivens them : but the intention probably is not yet complete ; and many things are meant to be hid, which are now too profusely shewn.\*

Having seen every thing on this side of the hill, we found we had seen only half the beauties of Persfield, and pursued a walk which led us over the ridge of the eminence to the opposite side. Here the ground depositing its wild appearance, assumes a more civilized form. It consists of a great

\* As it is many years since these remarks were made, several alterations have probably, since that time, taken place.

variety of lawns, intermixed with wood and rock ; and, though it often rises and falls, yet it descends without any violence into the country beyond it.

The views on this side are not the romantic steeps of the Wye ; but though of another species, they are equally grand. They are chiefly distances, consisting of the vast waters of the Severn, here an arm of the sea, bounded by a remote country ; of the mouth of the Wye entering the Severn ; and of the town of Chepstow, and its castle and abbey. Of all these distant objects an admirable use is made ; and they are shewn, (as the rocks of the Wye were on the other side,) sometimes in parts, and sometimes altogether. In one station we had the scenery of both sides of the hill at once.

It is a pity the ingenious embellisher of these scenes could not have been satisfied with the grand beauties of nature which he commanded. The shrubberies he has introduced in this part of his improvements, I fear, will rather be esteemed paltry. As the embellishments of a house, or as the ornaments of little scenes which have nothing better to recommend them, a few flowering shrubs









shrubs artfully composed may have their elegance and beauty ; but in scenes like this, they are only splendid patches, which injure the grandeur and simplicity of the whole.

— Fortasse cupressum  
 Scis simulare : quid hoc ? —  
 — Sit quidvis simplex duntaxat et unum.

It is not the shrub which offends ; it is the *formal introduction* of it. Wild underwood may be an appendage of the grandest scene ; it is a beautiful appendage. A bed of violets or lilies may enamel the ground with propriety at the root of an oak ; but if you introduce them artificially in a border, you introduce a trifling formality, and disgrace the noble object you wish to adorn.

From the scenes of Persfield we walked to Chepstow, our barge drawing too much water to pass the shallows till the return of the tide. In this walk we wished for more time than we could command, to examine the romantic scenes which surrounded us ; but we were obliged to return that evening to Monmouth.

The road, at first, affords beautiful distant views of those woody hills which had entertained us on the banks of the Wye ; and which appeared to as much advantage when connected with the country, as they had already done in union with the river : but the country soon loses its picturesque form, and assumes a bleak unpleasant wildness.

About seven miles from Chepstow, we had an extensive view into Wales, bounded by mountains very remote. But this view, though much celebrated, has little, except the grandeur of extension, to recommend it. And yet it is possible, that in some lights it may be very picturesque ; and that we might only have had the misfortune to see it in an unfavourable one. Different lights make so great a change even in the *composition* of landscape, at least in the *apparent* composition of it, that they create a scene perfectly new. In distance, especially, this is the case. Hills and vallies may be deranged ; awkward abruptnesses

ruptnesses and hollows introduced ; and the effect of woods and castles, and all the ornamental detail of a country lost. On the other hand, these ingredients of landscape may in *reality* be awkwardly introduced ; yet through the magical *influence of light*, they may be altered, softened, and rendered pleasing.

In a mountainous country particularly, I have often seen, during the morning hours, a range of hills rearing their summits, in ill-disposed fantastic shapes. In the afternoon, all this incorrect rudeness hath been removed ; and each mis-shapen summit hath softened beautifully into some pleasing form.

The different seasons of the year also produce the same effect. When the sun rides high in summer, and when, in the same meridian, he just skirts the horizon in winter, he forms the mountain-tops, and indeed the whole face of a country into very different appearances.

Fogs also vary a distant country as much as light, softening the harsh features of landscape ; and spreading over them a beautiful grey harmonizing tint.

We

We remark farther on this subject, that scarcely any landscape will stand the test of *different lights*. Some searching ray, as the sun veers round, will expose its defects. And hence it is, that almost *every* landscape is seen best under *some peculiar* illumination—either of an evening or of a morning, or, it may be, of a meridian sun.

During many miles we kept upon the heights; and, through a long and gentle descent, approached Monmouth. Before we reached it we were benighted; but as far as we could judge of a country through the grey obscurity of a summer-evening, this seemed to abound with many beautiful woody vallies among the hills, which we descended. A light of this kind, though not so favorable to landscape, is very favorable to the imagination. This active power embodies half-formed images, which it rapidly combines; and often composes landscapes, perhaps more beautiful, if the imagination be well-stored, than any that can be found in Nature herself. They  
are

are formed indeed from Nature—from the most beautiful of her scenes ; and having been treasured up in the memory, are called into these fanciful creations by some distant resemblances which strike the eye in the multiplicity of dubious surfaces that float before it.



## SECTION VI.

HAVING thus navigated the Wye between Ross and Chepstow, we had such pleasing accounts of its beautiful scenery above Ross, that if our time had permitted, we could have wished to have explored it.

A journal, however, fell into my hands (since the first edition of this book was printed) of a tour to the source of the Wye; and thence through the midland counties of Wales; which I shall put into a little form; and making a few picturesque remarks, which the subject may occasionally suggest, shall insert for the benefit of those who may have more time than we had.

From Ross to Hereford the great road leaves the river, which is hardly once seen. But it is not probable that much is lost; for the whole country here has a tame appearance.

The cathedral of Hereford consists, in many parts, of rich Gothic. The west-front is falling fast to decay, and is every year receiving more the form of a fine ruin\*.

At Hereford we again meet the Wye; of which we have several beautiful views from the higher grounds. The road now follows the course of the river to the Hay; winding along its northern banks.

About six miles from Hereford, and but little out of the road, stands Foxley. The form of the grounds about it, and the beautiful woods that surround it, are said to be worth seeing. My journalist says it contains a choice collection of pictures; and some good drawings of landscape by the late Mr. Price.

The ruins of Bradwardine-castle appear soon in view; though but little of them remains. At a bridge near them you cross the Wye, and now traverse the south-side of the river. The country which had been greatly varied before, begins now to form bolder swells. Among these Mirebich-hill, which rises full in

\* A subscription, I hear, is now opened to repair it.

front,

front, continues some time before the eye, as a considerable object.

Leaving Witney-bridge on the right, you still continue your course along the southern bank of the river, and come soon in view of the ruins of Clyfford-castle; where tradition informs us the celebrated Rosamond spent her early life.

Soon after you arrive at the Hay, a town pleasantly seated on the Wye. It was formerly a Roman station, and was long afterwards considered as a place of great strength, being defended by a castle and lofty walls, till Owen Glendouer laid it in ashes in one of those expeditions in which he drove Harry Bolingbroke

—thrice from the banks of Wye,  
And sandy-bottomed Severn—

If you have time to make a little excursion, you will find, about half way between the Hay and Abergavenny, the ruins of Llantony-priory. Dugdale describes it, in his *Monasticon*, as a scene richly adorned with wood. But Dugdale lived a century ago; which is a term

term that will produce or destroy the finest scenery. It has had the latter effect here, for the woods about Llantony-priory are now totally destroyed; and the ruin is wholly naked and desolate.

After this excursion you return again to the Hay, and continue your route to Bualt, still on the south-side of the river.

On the north-side, about four miles beyond the Hay, stands Maeslough, the ancient seat of the Howarths. The house shews the neglect of its possessor; though the situation is in its kind perhaps one of the finest in Wales. The view from the hall-door is spoken of as wonderfully amusing. A lawn extends to the river; which encircles it with a curve, at the distance of half a mile. The banks are enriched with various objects; among which, two bridges, with winding roads, and the tower of Glasbury-church, surrounded by a wood are conspicuous. A distant country equally enriched, fills the remote parts of the landscape, which is terminated by mountains. One of the bridges in this view, that at Glasbury, is remarkably light and

and elegant, consisting of several arches.—How these various objects are brought together I know not. I should fear there are too many of them.

As you continue your route to Bualt, the country grows grander and more picturesque. The valley of the Wye becomes contracted, and the road runs at the bottom, along the edge of the water.

It is possible, I think, the Wye may in this place be more beautiful than in any other part of its course. Between Ross and Chepstow, the grandeur and beauty of *its banks* are its chief praise. The *river itself* has no other merit than that of a winding surface of smooth water. But here, added to the same decoration from its banks, the Wye itself assumes a more beautiful character; pouring over shelving rocks, and forming itself into eddies and cascades, which a solemn parading stream through a flat channel cannot exhibit.

An additional merit also accrues to such a river from the different forms it assumes, according to the fulness or emptiness of the stream.

stream. There are rocks of all shapes and sizes, which continually vary the appearance of the water as it rushes over or plays among them ; so that such a river, to a picturesque eye, is a continued fund of new entertainment.

The Wye also, in this part of its course, still receives farther beauty from the woods which adorn its banks, and which the navigation of the river, in its lower reaches, forbids. Here the whole is perfectly rural and unincumbered. Even a boat, I believe, is never seen beyond the Hay. The boat itself might be an ornament ; but we should be sorry to exchange it for the beauties of such a river as will not suffer a boat.

Some beauties, however, the smooth river possesses above the rapid one. In the latter you cannot have those reflections which are so ornamental to the former : nor can you have in the rapid river the opportunity of contemplating the grandeur of its banks from the surface of the water, unless indeed the road winds close along the river at the bottom, when perhaps you may see them with additional advantage.

The foundation of these criticisms on *smooth* and *agitated* water is this: when water is exhibited in *small quantities* it wants the agitation of a torrent, a cascade, or some other adventitious circumstance to give it consequence; but when it is spread out in the *reach of some capital river*, in a *lake*, or an *arm of the sea*, it is then able to support its own dignity: in the former case it aims at beauty; in the latter at grandeur. Now the Wye has in no part of its course a quantity of water sufficient to give it any great degree of grandeur; so that of consequence the *smooth* part must, on the whole, yield to the more *agitated*, which possesses more beauty.

In this wild enchanting country stands Llangoed, the house of Sir Edward Williams. It is adorned, like the house at Foxley, with woods and playing grounds; but is a scene totally different. Here, however, the trees are finer than those at Foxley; and, when examined as individuals, appear to great advantage; though my journalist has heard

heard that some of the best of them have lately been cut down.

The road still continues through the same beautiful country along the banks of the Wye ; and in a few miles farther brings you to Bualt. This town is seated in a pleasant vale surrounded with woods.

A little beyond Bualt, where the river Irvon falls into the Wye, is a field, where, tradition says, Llewelin, the last prince of Wales, was put to death. Some historians say he was killed in battle ; but the traditional account of his being killed near Bualt seems more probable, and that he fell by the hands of an assassin. When Edward invaded Wales, Llewelin had entrenched himself in the fastnesses of Snowden. Here he might probably have foiled his adversary ; but some of his troops having been successful against the Earl of Surrey, one of Edward's generals, Llewelin came down from his strong holds, with the hope of improving his advantage, and offered Edward battle. Llewelin was totally routed ; and, in his flight into

into Glamorganshire, slept, the night before he was murdered, at Llechryd, which is now a farm-house. Here the farrier who shod his horse knew him under his disguise, and betrayed him to the people of Bualt, who put him to death ; and are to this day stigmatized with the name of *Brad wyr y Bualht*, the *traitors of Bualt*.

At Bualt you cross the Wye again, and now pursue your route along the north-side of the river. The same grand scenery continues, lofty banks, woody vales, a rocky channel, and a rapid stream.

Soon after you come to the sulphureous springs of Llanydrindod, which you leave on the right ; and crossing the river Ithon, reach Rhaader, a town about thirteen miles beyond Bualt.—To a Welshman the appearance of the Wye at *Rhaader* need not be described. The word signifies a *waterfall*. There is no cascade indeed of consequence near the place ; but the river being pent up within close rocky banks, and the channel being steep, the whole is a succession of waterfalls.

As you leave Rhaader you begin to approach the sources of the Wye. But the river having not yet attained its chief supplies, is rather insignificant ; and as the country becomes wilder and more mountainous, the scenery of the river is now *disproportioned*. There is not a sufficiency of water in the landscape to balance the land.

Llangerig, which is about twelve miles from Rhaader, is the last village you find on the banks of the Wye. Soon after all signs of inhabitancy cease. You begin to ascend the skirts of Plinlimmon ; and after rising gradually about ten miles from Llangerig, you arrive at the sources of a river, which through a course of so many leagues hath afforded you so much entertainment.

It is a singular circumstance, that within a quarter of a mile of the well-head of the Wye, arises the Severn. The two springs are nearly alike ; but the fortunes of rivers, like

like those of men, are owing to various little circumstances, of which they take the advantage in the early parts of their course. The Severn meeting with a tract of ground rising on the right, soon after it leaves Plinlimmon, receives a push towards the north-east. In this direction it continues its course to Shrewsbury. There, taking the advantage of other circumstances, it makes a turn to the south-east. Afterwards, still meeting with favourable opportunities, it successfully improves them; enlarging its circle; sweeping from one country to another; receiving large accessions every where of wealth and grandeur; till at length, with a full tide, it enters the ocean under the character of an arm of the sea.—In the meantime the Wye, meeting with no opportunities of any consequence to improve its fortunes, never makes any figure as a capital river, and at length becomes subservient to that very Severn, whose birth and early setting out in life were exactly similar to its own.—Between these two rivers is comprehended a district, consisting of great part of the counties of Montgomery, Radnor, Salop, Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester:

of

of the last country only that beautiful portion which forms the forest of Dean.

The country about Plinlimmon, vast, wild, and unfurnished, is neither adorned with accompaniments to be a scene of beauty: nor affords the materials of a scene of grandeur.—Though grandeur consists in simplicity, it must take *some form of landscape*; otherwise it is a shapeless waste; monstrous without proportion.—As there is nothing therefore in these inhospitable regions to detain you long, and no refreshment to be had, except a draught of pure water from the fountains of the Wye, you will soon be inclined to return to Rhaader.

From Rhaader my journal leads into Cardiganshire. Crossing the Wye you ascend a very steep mountain, about seven miles over. Then skirting the banks of a sweet little river, the Elan, which falls into the Wye, you pass through a corner of Montgomeryshire, which brings you to the verge of Cardiganshire.

The passage into this county is rather tremendous. You stand on very high ground, and see extending far below, a long contracted

tracted valley. The perspective from the top gives it rather the appearance of a chasm. Down one of the precipitous sides of this valley the road hurries you ; while the river Istwith at the bottom is ready to receive you, if your foot should slip or your horse stumble.

Having descended safely into the bottom of the valley, and having passed through it, you cross the river over a handsome bridge, and arrive at the village of Pentre. Near this place is Havod, the seat of Mr. Johnes, member for Radnorshire, which affords so much beautiful scenery that you should by no means pass by it. It will open suddenly upon you, at the close of a well-conducted approach. The house is new, built in a style between Gothic and Moorish. It is a style of building I am not acquainted with ; but I am informed it has a good effect. It is a large commodious mansion, richly furnished. One thing is worth observing : over the chimney of the dining room is placed a neat tablet of white marble with this inscription :

—*Prout cuique libido est,  
Siccat inequales cyathos.*—

The

The Welsh gentry are remarkable for their hospitality; which sometimes, I have heard, will not allow the *inequales cyathos*; but brings all to a *brimming level*. The spirit of this inscription, I hope, is diffusing itself more and more over the country.

But elegant houses and rich furniture are everywhere to be found. The scenery at Havod is the object; and such scenery is rarely met with.—The walks are divided into what is called the *lady's-walk*, a circuit of about three miles; and the *gentleman's-walk*, about six. To these is added a more extensive round, which might properly come under the denomination of a *riding*, if in all parts it was accessible to horse-men.

The general ground-plot of these walks, and the scenery through which they convey you, are much beyond what we commonly meet with.

The river Istwith runs at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, from the house, which stands upon a lawn consisting of varied grounds descending to the river. It is a rapid stream, and its channel is filled with rocks, like many other Welsh streams, which form cataracts and cascades in various parts,

parts, more broken and convulsed than the Wye about Buault. Its banks consist of great variety of wooded recesses, hills, sides of mountains, and contracted vallies, thwarting and opposing each other in various forms ; and adorned with little cascades running everywhere among them in guttered chasms. Of the grandeur and beauty of these scenes I can speak as an eye-witness : for though I was never on the spot, I have seen a large collection of drawings and sketches (not fewer than between twenty and thirty) which were taken from them.

Through this variety of grand scenery the several walks are conducted. The views shift rapidly from one to another ; each being characterized by some circumstance peculiar to itself.

The artificial ornaments are such chiefly as are necessary. Many bridges are wanted, both in crossing the Istwith and the several streams which run into it from the surrounding hills ; and they are varied as much as that species of architecture will admit, from the stone arch to the Alpine plank.— In one place you see a cottage pleasantly seated among the thickets of a woody hill,

which Mr. Johnes intends to fit up for the accommodation of a band of musicians; for so a pack of hounds may be called among the hills, and dales, and echoing rocks of these grand scenes.

Among the natural curiosities of the place is a noble cascade sixty feet high, which is seen through a cavern, partly natural and partly artificial. You enter it by a passage cut through a rock four feet broad and seven high; which continues about twenty yards, and brings you into a very lofty perforated cavern, through which you see the cascade to great advantage.

From the scenes of Havod you continue your excursions, among some other grand and beautiful exhibitions of landscape.

You are carried first to the *Devil's-Bridge*, about four miles from Havod. I do not clearly understand the nature of the scenery here from the account given in my journal; but I should suppose it is only one grand piece of fore-ground, without any distance or accompaniments; and probably one of those scenes which is itself sufficient to form a picture. The plan of it is a rocky chasm, over which is thrown an arch. Between the cheeks

cheeks of this chasm, and just beneath the bridge, the river Funnach falls abruptly down the space of several yards ; and afterwards meeting with other steeps, makes its way, after a few of these interruptions, into the Rhydol a little below. The bridge, I should suppose, is an interesting object. It consists of two arches, one thrown over the other ; the under one, which is that said to be built by the devil, was not thought sufficiently strong. The common people suppose, when he built it he had some mischief in his head.

From the Devil's-bridge you visit *Monk's bridge* ; where the same kind of scenery is exhibited under a different modification.

From this place you descend into the vale of Rhydol, called so from the river of that name, which passes through it.

If the Welsh counties, distinguished for so much beautiful scenery of various kinds, are remarkable for pre-eminence in any mode, I think it is in their *vales*. Their lakes are greatly exceeded, both in grandeur and beauty, by those of Cumberland, Westmore-

land, and Scotland. Nor are their mountains, as far as I have observed, of such picturesque form as many I have seen in those countries. They are often of a heavy lumpy kind ; for there are orders of architecture in mountains as well as in palaces. Their rivers, I allow, are often very picturesque ; and so are their sea-coast views. But their *vales* and *vallies*, I think, exceed those of any country I ever saw.

The vale of Rhydol is described as a very grand and extensive scene, continuing not less than ten miles, among rocks, hanging woods, and varied ground, which in some parts becomes mountainous ; while the river is everywhere a beautiful object ; and twice or three times, in its passage through the vale, is interrupted in its course, and formed into a cascade. This is a circumstance in a *vale*, I think, rather uncommon. In a *contracted valley* it is frequent ; but an *extended vale*, as I apprehend this to be, is seldom so interrupted as not to give way to the river on one side or the other. I can easily however imagine, that when the *whole vale* is interrupted, as I conceive it to be here, it will occasion a very beautiful scene, if the eye,

eye, from so good a *foreground*, hath such an elevated station as will enable it to trace the winding of the vale at a distance beyond the cascade. But this is perhaps reasoning (as we often do on higher subjects) without sufficient grounds. On the spot I should probably find that all these conceptions are wrong, that the obstructions of the river in the vale of Rhydol are no advantage to the scene, or, perhaps, after all, that the *vale of Rhydol* does not deserve that name; but is only a *contracted valley* of considerable length.

At the end of this *vale* or *valley*, by whichsoever of these names it ought to be distinguished, stands the ruins of *Abyrysthwick-castle*. Of this fortress little now remains but a solitary tower, over-looking the sea. Once it was the residence of the great Cadwallader; and in all the Welsh wars was considered as a fortress of the first consequence. Even so late as the civil wars of the last century it was esteemed a place of strength.

But the rich lead-mines in its neighbourhood were the basis of its glory. These mines are said to have yielded near a hundred ounces of silver from a ton of lead; and  
to

to have produced a profit of two thousand pounds a month. Here Sir Hugh Middleton made that vast fortune, which he expended afterwards on the New-river. But a gentleman of the name of Bushel worked these mines to the most profitable extent. He was allowed by Charles the First the privilege of setting up a mint in this castle for the benefit of paying his workmen. Here therefore all the business of the mines was transacted, which made Abyrysthwick-castle a place of more consequence and resort than any other place in Wales. King Charles also appointed Mr. Bushel governor of the Isle of Lundy ; where he made a harbour for the security of his vessels, which carried the produce of his mines up the Severn. When the civil wars broke out, he had an opportunity of shewing his gratitude ; which he did with the magnificence of a prince. He clothed the king's whole army, and offered his majesty a loan, which was considered as a gift, of forty thousand pounds. Afterwards, when Charles was pressed by the parliament, Mr. Bushel raised a regiment in his service at his own expence.

From the vale of Rhydol, you seek again the banks of the *Istwith*, and enter a vale which takes its name from the river.

This scene is another proof of what I have just observed of the Welsh vales. From the accounts I have heard of it, I should suppose it a scene of extraordinary beauty, *less romantic* than the vale of Rhydol, but *more sylvan*. Nature has introduced the rock more sparingly, but has made great amends by wood; though in one part of it, an immense rock forms a very grand feature.—It is much easier, however, to *conceive* the variety of these scenes than to describe them. Nature's alphabet consists only of four letters; wood, water, rock, and ground: and yet, with these four letters she forms such varied compositions, such infinite combinations, as no language with an alphabet of twenty-four can describe.

From the vale of Istwith you may visit the ruins of the abbey of *Strata Florida*: but there is little among those ruins, I should suppose, worth notice, except a Saxon gateway; and that can hardly be an object of much beauty. The painter, therefore, can make little use of this old abbey, and con-signs

signs it to the antiquarian, who tells you it was formerly the sacred repository of the bones of several of the Welsh princes ; and that here the records and acts of the principality were preserved for many generations.

From the ruins of Strata Florida you return to Hereford, through Rhosfair, Rhaader, Pinabout, and New Radnor ; in which route I find nothing in my journal mentioned as worth notice ; though it is hardly possible that in so large a tract of rough country there should not be many picturesque passages.

Here we drop our journal and return to Monmouth.





## SECTION VII.

FROM Monmouth to Abergavenny, by Ragland-castle, the road is a good stone causeway, (as the roads in these parts commonly are,) and leads through a pleasant inclosed country; discovering on each side extensive views of rich cultivation.

*Ragland-castle* seemed to stand (as we saw it from the heights) in a vale; but as we descended, it took an elevated station. It is a large and very noble ruin: more perfect than ruins of this kind commonly are. It contains two areas within the ditch; into each of which you enter by a lofty and lengthened gateway.

The buildings which circumscribe the first area, consist of the kitchen and offices. It is amusing to hear stories of ancient hospitality. “Here are the remains of an oven,” said

said our conductor, “ which was large enough “ to bake a whole ox ; and of a fire-range “ wide enough to roast him.”

The great hall, or banqueting-room, a large and lofty apartment, forms the screen between the two areas ; and is perfect, except the roof. The music-gallery may be distinctly traced ; and the butteries, which divide the hall from a parlour. Near the hall is shewn a narrow chapel.

On viewing the comparative size of halls and chapels in old castles, one can hardly, at first, avoid observing, that the founders of these ancient structures supposed a much greater number of people would meet together to feast than to pray. But yet we may perhaps account for the thing, without calling in question the piety of our ancestors. The hall was meant to regale a whole country ; while the chapel was intended only for the private use of the inhabitants of the castle.

The whole area of the first inclosure is vaulted, and contains cellars, dungeons, and other subterraneous apartments.--The buildings of the second area are confined merely to chambers.

Near





Near the castle stands the citadel, a large octagonal tower; two or three sides of which are still remaining. This tower is incircled by a separate moat: and was formerly joined to the castle by a drawbridge.

Ragland-castle owes its present picturesque form to Cromwell, who laid his iron hands upon it; and shattered it into ruin. A window is shewn, through which a girl in the garrison, by waving a handkerchief, introduced his troops.

From Ragland-castle the views are still extensive, the roads inclosed, and the country rich. The distances are skirted by the Brecknoc-hills; among which the *Sugar-loaf* makes a remarkable appearance.

The Brecknoc-hills are little more than gentle swellings, cultivated to the top. For many miles they kept their station in a distant range on each side. But by degrees they began to close in, approximating more and more, and leaving in front a narrow pass between them; through which an extensive country appeared. Through this pass

we

we hoped the progress of our road would lead us; as it seemed to open into a fair and beautiful country.

It led us first to Abergavenny, a small town, which has formerly been fortified, lying under the hills. We approached it by the castle; of which nothing remains but a few staring ruins.

Hence we were carried, as we expected, through the pass; which we had long observed at a distance, and which opened into the vale of Usk.

The vale of Usk is a delightful scene. The river from which it borrows its name winds through the middle of it; and the hills, on both sides, are diversified with woods and lawns. In many places they are partially cultivated. We could distinguish little cottages and farms, faintly traced along their shadowy sides; which, at such a distance, rather varied and enriched the scene, than impressed it with any regular and unpleasing shapes.

Through this kind of road we passed many miles. The Usk continued everywhere our playful









playful companion ; and if at any time it made a more devious curve than usual, we were sure to meet it again at the next turn. Our passage through the vale was still more enlivened by many little foaming rills crossing the road, (some of them large enough to make bridges necessary,) and two ruined castles, with which, at proper intervals, the country is adorned.

After leaving the latter of them, called Tretower - castle, we mounted some high grounds, which gave variety to the scene, though not so picturesque an exhibition of it. Here the road brought us in view of *Langor's-pool*; which is no very inconsiderable lake. As we descended these heights, the Usk met us once more at the bottom, and conducted us into Brecknac.

*Brecknac* is a very romantic place, abounding with broken grounds, torrents, dismantled towers, and ruins of every kind. I have seen few places where a landscape-painter might get a collection of better ideas. The castle has once been large; and is still a ruin of dignity. It is easy to trace the main body,

body, the citadel, and all the parts of ancient fortification.

In many places indeed these works are too much ruined even for picturesque use. Yet, ruined as they are, as far as they go they are amusing. The arts of modern fortification are ill calculated for the purposes of landscape. The angular and formal works of Vauban and Cohorn, when it comes to their turn to be superseded by works of superior invention, will make a poor figure in the annals of picturesque beauty. No eye will ever be delighted with their ruins ; while not the least fragment of a British or a Norman castle exists, that is not surveyed with delight.

But the most beautiful scenery we saw at Brecknoc, is about the abbey. We had a view of it, though but a transient view, from a little bridge in the neighbourhood. There we saw a sweet limpid stream, glistening over a bed of pebbles, and forming two or three cascades as it hurried to the bridge. It issued from a wood, with which its banks were beautifully hung. Amidst the gloom arose the ruins of the abbey, tinged with a bright ray, which discovered a profusion of rich

rich Gothic workmanship ; and exhibited in pleasing contrast the grey stone, of which the ruins are composed, with the feathering foliage that floated around them ; but we had no time to examine how all these beauteous parts were formed into a whole.—The imagination formed it, after the vision vanished : but though the imagination might possibly create a *whole* more agreeable to the rules of painting, yet it could scarcely do justice to the beauty of the *parts*.

From *Brecknac*, in our road to Trecastle, we enter a country very different from the vale of Usk. This too is a vale : but Nature always marks even kindred scenes with some peculiar character. The vale of Usk is almost one continued winding sweep. The road *now* played among a variety of hills. The whole seemed to consist of one great vale divided into a multiplicity of parts. All together, they wanted unity ; but separately, afforded a number of those pleasing passages, which, treasured up in the memory, become the ingredients of future landscapes.

Some-

Sometimes the road, instead of winding round the hills, took the shortest way over them. In general, they are cultivated like those of the vale of Usk: but as the cultivation in many of them is brought too near the eye, it becomes rather offensive. Our best ideas were obtained from such as were adorned with wood; and fell, in various forms, into the vallies below.

In these scenes we lost the Usk, our sweet, amusing companion in the vale: but other rivers of the same kind frequently met us, though they seldom continued long; disappearing in haste, and hiding themselves among the little tufted recesses at the bottom of the hills.

In general, the Welsh gentlemen in these parts seem fond of whitening their houses, which gives them a disagreeable glare. A *speck* of white is often beautiful; but white, in *profusion*, is, of all tints, the most inharmonious. A white seat at the corner of a wood, or a few white cattle grazing in a meadow, enliven a scene perhaps more than if

if the seat or the cattle had been of any other colour. They have meaning and effect. But a front and two staring wings, an extent of rails, a huge Chinese bridge, the tower of a Church, and a variety of other large objects, which we often see daubed over with white, make a disagreeable appearance, and unite ill with the general simplicity of Nature's colouring.

Nature never colours in this offensive way. Her surfaces are never white. The chalky cliff is the only permanent object of the kind which she allows to be hers ; and this seems rather a force upon her from the boisterous action of a furious element. But even here it is her constant endeavour to correct the offensive tint. She hangs her chalky cliff with samphire and other marine plants ; or she stains it with various hues, so as to remove, in part at least, the disgusting glare. The western end of the isle of Wight, called the Needle-cliffs, is a remarkable instance of this. These rocks are of a substance nearly resembling chalk : but Nature has so reduced their unpleasant lustre by a variety of chastising tints, that in most lights they have even a beautiful effect. She is continually

at work also, in the same manner, on the white cliffs of Dover; though her endeavours here are more counteracted by a greater exposure. But here, and in all other places, were it not for the intervention of foreign causes, she would in time throw her green mantle over every naked and exposed part of her surface.

In these remarks I mean only to insinuate, that *white* is a hue which nature seems studious to expunge from all her works, except in the touch of a flower, an animal, a cloud, a wave, or some other diminutive or transient object; and that *her mode* of colouring should always be the model of *ours*.

In animadverting however on *white objects*, I would only censure the mere *raw tint*. It may easily be corrected, and turned into stone-colours of various hues; which though light, if not too light, may often have a good effect.

Mr. Lock, who did me the favour to overlook these papers, made some remarks on this part of my subject, which are so new and so excellent, that I cannot, without impropriety, take the credit of them myself.

“ White offers a more extended scale of  
 “ light and shadow than any other colour,  
 “ when near : and is more susceptible of  
 “ the predominant tint of the air, when  
 “ distant. The transparency of its shadows  
 “ (which in near objects partake so little of  
 “ darkness, that they are rather second lights)  
 “ discovers, without injuring the principal  
 “ light, all the details of surfaces.

“ I partake, however, of your general dis-  
 “ like to the colour ; and though I have  
 “ seen a very *splendid effect* from an *accidental*  
 “ *light* on a white object, yet I think it a  
 “ hue which oftener injures than improves  
 “ the scene. It particularly disturbs the  
 “ air in its office of graduating distances,  
 “ shews objects nearer than they really are,  
 “ and by pressing them on the eye, often  
 “ gives them an importance, which from  
 “ their form and situation they are not en-  
 “ titled to.

“ The white of snow is so active and  
 “ refractory as to resist the discipline of  
 “ every harmonizing principle. I think I  
 “ never saw Mont Blanc, and the range of  
 “ snows which run through Savoy, in union  
 “ with the rest of the landscape, except when

“ they were tinged by the rays of the rising  
“ and setting sun, or participated of some  
“ other tint of the surrounding sky. In  
“ the clear and colourless days so frequent  
“ in that country, the Glaciers are always  
“ out of tune.”

## SECTION VIII.

FROM Trecastle we ascended a steep of three miles, which the country people call a *pitch*. It raised us to a level with the neighbouring hills, whose rugged summits interrupted our views into the vallies below.

From these heights we descended gently through a space of seven miles. As we approached the bottom, we saw at a distance the town of Llandovery, seated in the meadows below, at the conflux of several rivulets. Unadorned with wood, it made only a naked appearance; but light wreaths of smoke rising from it in several parts shewed that it was inhabited, while a ray of the setting sun singled it out among the objects of the vale, and gave it some little consequence in the landscape. As we descended into it, its importance increased. We were met by an old castle which had formerly defended it, though nothing remains except the ruins of the citadel.

Llan-

Llandovery stands at the entrance of the vale of Towy, which, like other vales, receives its name from the river that winds through it; its delightful scenery opened before us as we left Llandovery in our way to Llandilo, which stands about twelve miles lower in the vale.

The vale of Towy is still less a scene of cultivation than that of Usk; the wood-land views are more frequent, and the whole more wild and simple. The scenery seems precisely of that kind with which a great master in landscape was formerly enamoured.

— Juvat arva videre  
 Non rastris hominum, non ulli obnoxia curæ :  
 Rura mihi, & rigui placeant in vallibus amnes ;  
 Flumina amem, sylvasque —

In this vale the river Towy, though it frequently met us, and always kept near us, yet did not so constantly appear, and bear us such close company, as the Usk had done before. Some heights too we ascended, but such heights as were only proper stands, whence we viewed in greater perfection the beauties of the vale.

This

This is the scene which Dyer celebrated in his poem of *Grongar-hill*. Dyer was bred a painter ; and had here a picturesque subject ; but he does not give us so good a landscape as might have been expected. We have nowhere a complete formed distance ; though it is the great idea suggested by such a vale as this : nowhere any touches of that beautiful obscurity which melts a variety of objects into one rich whole. Here and there we have a few *accidental* strokes which belong to distance\*, though seldom masterly. I call them *accidental*, because they are not employed in producing a landscape ; nor do they in fact unite in any such idea ; but are

\* As where he describes the beautiful form which removed cultivation takes :

How close and small the hedges lie !  
What streaks of meadow cross the eye !

Or a distant spire seen by sun-set :

Rising from the woods the spire  
Seems from far, ascending fire.

Or the aerial view of a distant hill :

——— yon summits soft and fair  
Clad in colours of the air ;  
Which to those, who journey near,  
Barren, brown, and rough appear.

rather

rather introductory to some moral sentiment, which, however good in itself, is perhaps here rather forced and misplaced.

*Dinevawr-castle*, which stands about a mile from Llandilo, and the scenery around it, were the next objects of our curiosity. This castle is seated on one of the sides of the vale of Towy, where it occupies a bold eminence richly adorned with wood. It was used not long ago as a mansion ; but Mr. Rice, the proprietor of it, has built a handsome house in his park, about a mile from the castle, which, however, he still preserves as one of the greatest ornaments of his place.

This castle also is taken notice of by Dyer in his Grongar-hill, and seems intended as an object in a distance ; but *his* distances, I observed, are all in confusion ; and indeed it is not easy to separate them from his fore-grounds.

The landscape he gives us, in which the castle of Dinevawr makes a part, is seen from the brow of a distant hill. The first object that meets his eye is a wood : it is just beneath





neath him, and he easily distinguishes the several trees of which it is composed :

The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,  
The yellow beech, the sable yew,  
The slender fir that taper grows,  
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs.

This is perfectly right; objects so near the eye should be distinctly marked. What next strikes him is a *purple-grove*; that is, I presume, a grove which has gained its *purple-hue* from distance. This is, no doubt, very just colouring; though it is here, I think, introduced rather too early in the landscape. The blue and purple tints belong chiefly to the most removed objects, which seem not here to be intended. Thus far, however, I should not greatly cavil.

The next object he surveys is a level lawn, from which a hill crowned with a castle arises; this is meant, I am informed, for Dineawr. Here his great want of *keeping* appears. The castle, instead of being marked with still fainter colours than the *purple-grove*, is touched with all the strength of a fore-ground; you see the very ivy creeping upon its walls. Transgressions of this kind are common

common in descriptive poetry. Innumerable instances might be collected from better poems than Grongar-hill. But I mention only the inaccuracies of an author, who, as a painter, should at least have observed the most obvious principles of his art.—With how much more picturesque truth does Milton introduce a distant castle :

Towers and battlements he sees,  
Bosomed high in tufted trees.

Here we have all the indistinct colouring which obscures a distant object. We do not see the iron-grated window, the portcullis, the ditch, or the rampart. We can just distinguish a castle from a tree, and a tower from a battlement.

The scenery around Dinevawr-castle is very beautiful, consisting of a rich profusion of wood and lawn ; but what particularly recommends it is, the great variety of ground. I know few places where a painter might study the inequalities of a surface with more advantage.

Nothing

Nothing gives so just an idea of the beautiful swellings of ground as those of water, where it has sufficient room to undulate and expand. In ground which is composed of refractory materials, you are presented often with harsh lines, angular insertions, and disagreeable abruptnesses. In water, whether in gentle or in agitated motion, all is easy; all is softened into itself; and the hills and the vallies play into each other, in a variety of beautiful forms. In agitated water abruptnesses indeed there are; but yet they are such as, in some part or other, unite properly with the surface around them, and are, on the whole, perfectly harmonious. Now if the ocean in any of these swellings and agitations could be arrested and fixed, it would produce that pleasing variety which we admire in ground. Hence it is common to take images from water and apply them to land. We talk of a waving line, an undulating lawn, and a billowy surface; and give a stronger and more adequate idea by such imagery than plain language can easily present.

The woods which adorn these beautiful scenes about Dinevawr-castle, and which form them-

themselves into many pleasing groups, consist chiefly of the finest oak ; some of them of large Spanish chesnuts. There are a few, and but a few, young plantations.

The picturesque scenes which this place affords are numerous. Wherever the castle appears, and it appears almost everywhere, a landscape purely picturesque is generally presented. The ground is so beautifully disposed, that it is almost impossible to have bad composition. At the same time, the opposite side of the vale often appears as a background, and makes a pleasing distance.

Somewhere among the woody scenes of Dinevawr, Spenser hath conceived, with that splendour of imagination which brightens all his descriptions, the cave of Merlin to be seated. Whether there is any opening in the ground which favours the fiction, I find no account ; the stanzas however are too much in place to be omitted.

To Maridunum, that is now, by change  
Of name, Cayr-Merlin called, they took their way ;  
There the wise Merlin whilom wont, they say,  
To make his wonne low underneath the ground,

In





In a deep delve, far from the view of day,  
 That of no living wight he mote be found.  
 When so he counselled, with his sprights encompass round.

And if thou ever happen that same way  
 To travel, go to see that dreadful place ;  
 It is a hideous, hollow, cave-like bay  
 Under a rock, that lies a little space  
 From the swift Barry, tumbling down apace,  
 Emongst the woody hills of Dinevawr.  
 But dare thou not, I charge, in any case  
 To enter into that same baleful bower,  
 For fear the cruel fiends should thee unwares devour.

But standing high aloft, low lay thine ear ;  
 And there such ghastly noise of iron chains,  
 And brazen cauldrons thou shalt rombling hear,  
 Which thousand sprights with long enduring pains  
 Do toss, that it will stun thy feeble brains.  
 And oftentimes great groans, and grievous stounds,  
 When too huge toil, and labour them constrains.  
 And oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds  
 From under that deep rock most horribly rebounds\*.

As we returned from Dinevawr-castle, into the road, a noble scene opened before us. It is a distant view of a grand circular part of the vale of Towy, (circular at least in appearance,) surrounded by hills, one behind another ; and forming a vast amphitheatre. Through this expanse (which is rich to pro-

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\* Book III. Cant. 3.

fusion with all the objects of cultivation, melted together into one mass by distance) the Towy winds in various meanders. The eye cannot trace the whole serpentine course of the river ; but sees it here and there in glittering spots, which gives the imagination a pleasing employment in making out the whole. The nearest hills partake of the richness of the vale ; the distant hills which rise gently above the others, seem barren.





## SECTION IX.

FROM Dinevawr-castle we set out across the country for Neath; a good turnpike-road, we were assured, would lead us thither, but we were told much of the difficulty of passing *the mountain*, as they emphatically call a ridge of high ground which lay before us.

Though we had left the vale of Towy, the country continued to wear the same face of hill and dale which it had so long worn. On the right we had still a distant view of the scenery of Dinevawr-castle, which appeared like a grand woody bank. The woods also of Golden-grove varied the scene. Soon after, other castles, seated loftily on rising grounds, adorned other vales; Truslan-castle on the right, and Caerkennel on the left.

But

But all these beautiful scenes by degrees were closed ; castles, and winding rivers, and woody banks were left behind, one after another, and we approached nearer and nearer the tremendous mountain ; which spread its dark mantle athwart the view.

It did not however approach precipitately ; though it had long blotted out all distance, yet its environs afforded a present scene, and partook of the beautiful country we had passed. The ground about its foot was agreeably disposed, swelling into a variety of little knolls covered with oak, which a foaming rivulet, winding along, shaped into tufted islands and peninsulas of different forms, wearing away the soil in some parts from the roots of the trees, and in others delving deep channels ; while the mountain afforded a dark solemn back-ground to the whole.

At length we began to ascend ; but before we had risen too high, we turned round to take a retrospect of all the rich scenes together, which we had left behind. It was a noble view, distance melting into distance, till the whole was closed by a semicircle of azure mountains,

mountains, scarcely distinguishable from the sky which absorbed them.

Still ascending the spiral road round the shaggy side of the mountain, we arrived at what is called its *gate*. Here all idea of cultivation ceased. That was not deplorable ; but with it our turnpike-road ceased also ; which was finished on this side, no farther than the *mountain-gate*. We had gotten a guide however to conduct us over the pathless desert. But it being too steep and rugged to ascend on wheels, we were obliged to lighten our carriage, and ascend on foot.

In the midst of our labour, our guide called out that he saw a storm coming on along the tops of the mountains, a circumstance indeed which in these hilly countries cannot often be avoided. We asked him, How far it was off ? He answered, Ten minutes. In less time, sky, mountains, and vallies were all wrapt in one cloud of driving rain and obscurity.

Our recompence consisted in following with our eye the rear of the storm ; observing through its broken skirts a thousand beautiful effects and half-formed images, which were continually opening, lost, and varying,

varying, till the sun breaking out, the whole resplendent landscape appeared again with double radiance, under the leaden gloom of the retiring tempest.

When we arrived at the top of the mountain, we found a level plain, which continued at least two miles. It was a noble terrace; but was too widely spread to give us a display of much distant scenery.

At length we began to descend the mountain, and soon met an excellent turnpike-road, down which we slid swiftly, in an elegant spiral, and found, when we came to the bottom, that we had spent near four hours in surmounting this great obstruction.

Having thus passed the mount Cenis of this country, we fell into the same kind of beautiful scenery on this side of it which we had left on the other: only here the scene was continually shifting, as if by magical interposition.

We were first presented with a view of a deep woody glen lying below us, which the eye could not penetrate, resting only on the tops and tuftings of the trees.

This

This suddenly vanished, and a grand rocky bank arose in front, richly adorned with wood.

It was instantly gone, as we were shut up in a close woody lane.

In a moment, the lane opened on the right, and we had a view of an enchanting vale.

We caught its beauties as a vision only. In an instant they fled, and in their room arose two bold woody promontories. We could just discover between them, as they floated past, a creek, or the mouth of a river, or a channel of the sea. We knew not what it was: but it seemed divided by a stretch of land of dingy hue, which appeared like a sand-bank.

This scene shifting, immediately arose, on our left, a vast hill, covered with wood; through which, here and there, projected huge masses of rock.

In a few moments it vanished, and a grove of trees suddenly shot up in its room.

But before we could even discover of what species they were, the rocky hill, which had just appeared on the left, winding rapidly round, presented itself full in front. It had

now acquired a more tremendous form. The wood, which had before hid its terrors, was now gone; and the rocks were all left, in their native wildness, every where bursting from the soil.

Many of the objects which had floated so rapidly past us, if we could have examined them, would have given us sublime and beautiful hints in landscape; some of them seemed even well combined, and ready prepared for the pencil; but, in so quick a succession, one blotted out another; and it would have been endless to stop our chaise and examine them all. The country at length giving way on both sides, a view opened, which suffered the eye to rest upon it.

The river Neath, covered with shipping, was spread before us. Its banks were enriched with wood, amidst which arose the ruins of Neath-abbay, with its double tower. Beyond the river the country arose in hills, which were happily adorned, when we saw them in a clear serene evening, with one or two of those distant forges or charcoal-pits, which





which we admired on the banks of the Wye, wreathing a light veil of smoke along their summits and blending them with the sky.— Through this landscape we entered the town of Neath, which with its old castle, and bridges, excited many picturesque ideas.



## SECTION X.

As we left Neath, a grand vista of woody mountains, pursuing each other along the river, and forming, no doubt, some enchanting vale, if we had had time to examine it, stretched into remote distance.

The vistas of art are tame and formal. They consist of streets, with the unvarying repetition of doors and windows; or they consist of trees planted nicely in rows; a succession of mere vegetable columns; or they consist of some other species of regularity: but Nature's vistas are of a different cast. She forms them sometimes of mountains, sometimes of rocks, and sometimes of woods. But all her works, even of this formal kind are the works of a master. If the idea of regularity be impressed on the *general form*, the *parts* are broken with a thousand varieties. Her vistas are models to paint from.—In  
*this*

*this* before us, both the mountains themselves and the perspective combination of them, were beautiful.

The broken ground about a copper-work, a little beyond the town, would afford hints for a noble landscape. Two contiguous hills appear as if riven asunder, and lay open a picturesque scene of rocky fragments, interspersed with wood, through which a torrent, forcing its way, forms two or three cascades before it reached the bottom.

A little beyond this, the views which had entertained us as we entered Neath, entertained us a second time as we left it. The river covered with shipping, presented itself again. The woody scenery arose on its banks, and the abbey appeared among the woods, though in different perspective, and in a more removed situation.

Here too we were again presented with those two woody promontories of which we had

had just obtained a glimpse before, with a creek or channel between them, divided by what seemed a sand-bank. We had now approached much nearer, and found we had been right in our conjecture\*. The extensive object we had seen, was the bank of Margam, which, when the sea retires, is a vast sandy flat.

Hence we had, for a considerable time, continued views on the left of grand woody promontories pursuing each other, all rich to profusion, with sea views on the right. Such an intermixture of high-lands and sea, where the objects are beautiful and well disposed, makes, in general, a pleasing mode of composition. The roughness of the mountains above, and the smooth expanse of the waters below, wonderfully aid each other by the force of contrast.

From these views we were hurried at once upon a bleak sea-coast, which gave a kind of relief to the eye, almost surfeited with rich landscape. Margam sand-bank, which, seen

\* See page 114.

partially

partially, afforded a sweet chastising tint to the verdure of the woody promontories through which we had twice seen it, became now (when unsupported and spread abroad in all its extension) a cold, disgusting object. ——But relief was everywhere at hand, and we seldom saw it long without some intervention of woody scenery.

As we approached the river Abravon, the country degenerated still more. Margam sand-bank, which was now only the boundary of marshes, became offensive to the eye ; and though on the left the woody hills continued still shooting after us, yet they had lost their pleasing shapes. No variety of breaks, like the members of architecture, gave a lightness and elegance to their forms : no mantling furniture invested their sides ; nor tufted fringe adorned their promontories ; nor scattered oak discovered the sky through interstices along their towering summits : instead of this, they had degenerated into mere uniform lumps of matter, and were everywhere overspread with one heavy uninterrupted bush.

Of

Of this kind were Lord Mansell's woods which cover a promontory. Time with its lenient hand may hereafter hang new beauties upon these hills, when it has corrected their heaviness, by improving the luxuriance of youthful foliage into the lighter forms of aged trees.

From Lord Mansell's to Pyle, which stands on a bleak coast, the spirit of the country is totally lost.

Here we found the people employed in sending provisions to the shore, where a Dutch West-India ship had just been wrecked. Fifteen lives were lost, and among them the whole family of a Zealand merchant, who was bringing his children for education to Amsterdam. The populace came down in large bodies to pillage the wreck, which the officers of the customs and gentlemen of the country assembled to protect. It was a busy scene, composed of multitudes of men, carts, horses, and horsemen.

The

The bustle of a crowd is not ill-adapted to the pencil; but the management of it requires great artifice. The whole must be massed together and considered as one body.

I mean not to have the whole body so agglomerated as to consist of no detached groupes; but to have these groupes (of which there should not be more than two or three) appear to belong to one whole, by the artifice of composition, and the effect of light.

This great whole must be varied also in its parts. It is not enough to stick bodies and heads together. Figures must be contrasted with figures, and life, spirit, and action must pervade the whole.

Thus in managing a crowd, and in managing a landscape, the same general rules are to be observed. Though the *parts* must be *contrasted*, the *whole* must be *combined*; but the difficulty is the greater in a crowd; as its parts, consisting of animated bodies, require a nicer observation of form: being all similar likewise, they require more art in the combination of them.

*Composition* indeed has never a more difficult work, than when it is engaged in combining a crowd. When a number of people, all coloured alike, are to be drawn up in rank and file, it is not in the art of man to combine them in a picturesque manner. We can introduce a rencounter of horse where all regularity is broken, or we can exhibit a few general officers with their aids-de-camp on the foreground, and cover a fighting army with smoke at a distance ; but the files of war, the regiment or squadron in military array, admit no picturesque composition. Modern heroes, therefore, must not look to have their achievements recorded on canvas, till they abrogate their formal arts. — But even when we take all the advantages of shape and colour with which the human form can be varied or cloathed, we find it still a matter of difficulty enough.

I do not immediately recollect having seen a crowd better managed than Hogarth has managed one in the last print of his idle apprentice. In combining the multifarious company, which attends the spectacle of an execution, he hath exemplified all the observations I have made. I have not the print

print before me ; but I have often admired it in this light ; nor do I recollect observing any thing offensive in it ; which is rare in the management of such a multitude of figures.

The subject before us is as well adapted, as any species of crowd can be, to exhibit the beauties of composition. Horses, carts, and men make a good assemblage, and this variety in the parts would appear to great advantage in contrast with the simplicity of a winding shore, and of a stranded ship (a large dark object) heeling on one side, in the corner of the piece.

## SECTION XI.

FROM Pyle the country grows still worse ; till at last it degenerates into a naked heath ; and continues a long time totally unadorned, or at best with a few transient beauties.

At *Bridgend*, where we met the river Ogmore, a beautiful landscape bursts again upon us. Woody banks arise on both sides, on the right especially, which continue a considerable way, marking the course of the river. On the left is a rich distance.

Hence we pass in view of cultivated valleys, into which the rich distance we had just seen began to form itself, while the road winds over a kind of terrace above them. An old castle also enriches the scene ; till at

at length the terrace giving way, we sink into the vale, and enter Cowbridge.

The heights beyond Cowbridge give us the first view of the Bristol channel on the right. The country between the eye and the water has a marshy appearance, but being well blended, and the lines broken, it makes a tolerable distance. The road passes through pleasant inclosed lanes.

At the fifth stone before we reached Cardiff, we had a most grand and extensive view from the heights of Clanditham. It contained an immense stretch of country, melting gradually into a faint blue semicircle of mountains, which edged the horizon ; this scene indeed, painted in syllables, words, and sentences, appears very like some of the scenes we had met with before, but in nature it was very different from any of them.

In distant views of cultivated countries, seen from lofty stands, the parts which lie nearest the eye are commonly disgusting. The divisions of property into squares, rhomboids,

boids, and other mathematical forms, are unpleasant. A view of this kind therefore does not assume its beauty, till on descending a little lower, the hedge-rows begin to lengthen, and form those agreeable *discriminations* of which Virgil\* takes notice; where fields and meadows become extended streaks, and yet are broken in various parts by rising grounds, castles, and other objects with which distances abound; melting away from the eye in one general azure tint, just here and there diversified with a few lines of light and shade, and dotted with a few indistinct objects. Then, if we are so happy as to find a ruin, a spreading tree, a bold rock, or some other object large enough, with its appendages, to become a foreground, and balance the distance, (such as we found among the abrupt heights of Coteswold†,) we have the chance of being presented with a noble picture, which *distance alone* cannot give.

Hence appears the absurdity of carrying a painter to the top of a high hill to take a

\* ——et laté discriminat agros. *Æn.* II. 144.

† See page 10.

view. He cannot do it. Extension alone, though amusing in nature, will never make a picture. It *must* be *supported*.

Cardiff lies low, though it is not unpleasantly seated on the land side among woody hills. As we *approached*, it appeared with more of the furniture of antiquity about it than any town we had seen in Wales ; but *on the spot* the picturesque eye finds it too entire to be in full perfection. The castle, which was formerly the prison of the unfortunate Robert, son of William the First, who languished here the last twenty years of his life, is still, I believe, a prison, and in good repair.

From the town and parts adjacent, the windings and approach of the river Tave from the sea, with the full tide, make a grand appearance. This is, on the whole, the finest estuary we have seen in Wales.

From the heights beyond Cardiff, the views of the channel on the right continue, and of the Welsh mountains on the left. The Sugar-

Sugar-loaf near Abergavenny appears still distinctly. The road leads through inclosed lanes.

Newport lies pleasantly on a declivity. A good view might be taken from the retrospect of the river, the bridge and the castle. A few slight alterations would make it picturesque.

Beyond Newport some of the views of the channel were finer than any we had seen. The coast, though it continues flat, becomes more woody, and the parts are larger.

About seven miles from Newport, the road winds among woody hills; which here and there form beautiful dips at their intersections. On one of these knolls stand the ruins of a castle, which has once made a grand appearance; but it is now degraded into a modern dwelling.

As we approached the passage over the Bristol channel, the views of it became still

more interesting. On the right, we left the magnificent ruins of Caldicot-castle, and arrived at the ferry-house about three in the afternoon, where we were so fortunate as to find the boat preparing to set sail. It had attempted to cross at high water in the morning, but after toiling three hours against the wind, it was obliged to put back. This afforded another opportunity when the water was at ebb ; for the boat can pass only at the two extremes of the tide, and seldom oftener than once in a day.

We had scarcely alighted at the ferry-house, when we heard the boatman winding his horn from the beach about a quarter of a mile below, as a signal to bring down the horses. When they were all embarked, the horn sounded again for the passengers. A very multifarious company assembled ; and a miserable walk we had to the boat through sludge and over shelying and slippery rocks. When we got to it we found eleven horses on board, and above thirty people ; and our chaise (which we had intended to convert into a cabin during the voyage) slung into the shrouds.

The boat, after some struggling with the shelves, at length gained the channel. The wind was unfavourable, which obliged us to make several *tacks*, as the seamen phrase them. These tacks occasioned a fluttering in the sail; and this produced a fermentation among the horses, till their fears reduced them again to order.

Livy gives us a beautiful picture of the terror of cattle in a scene of this kind.—

“ Primus erat pavor, quum, soluta rate, in  
 “ altum raperentur. Ibi urgentes inter se,  
 “ cedentibus extremis ab aquâ, trepidati-  
 “ onem aliquantam edebant; donec quietem  
 “ ipse timor circumspicientibus aquam fe-  
 “ cisset\*.”

The scenery of this short voyage was of little value. We had not here the steep folding banks of the Wye to produce a succession of new landscapes. Our picture now was motionless. From the beginning

\* Lib. XXI. cap. xxviii.

to the end of the voyage it continued the same : it was only a display of water, varied by that little change introduced by distance, on a coast which, seen from so low a point as the surface of the water, became a mere thread. The screens bore no proportion to the area.

After beating near two hours against the wind, our voyage concluded as it began, with an uncomfortable walk through the sludge to the high-water mark.

The worst part of the affair is the usage of horses. If they are unruly, or any accident occurs, there is hardly a possibility, at least if the vessel be crowded, of affording them relief. Early in our voyage, as the boat heeled, one of the poor animals fell down. Many an ineffectual struggle it made to rise, but nothing could be done till we arrived at the other side.

The operation too of landing horses, is equally disagreeable. They are forced out of the boat, through an aperture in the side of it ; which is so inconvenient a mode of egress, that in leaping many have been hurt from the difficulty of disengaging their hinder legs.

This

This passage as well as the other over the Severn, (for there is one also a little above,) are often esteemed dangerous. The tides are uncommonly rapid in this channel ; and when a brisk wind happens to blow in a contrary direction, the waters are rough. The boats too are often ill-managed ; for what is done repeatedly, is often done carelessly. A British admiral, who had lived much at sea, riding up to one of these ferries, with an intention to pass over, and observing the boat, as she was working across the channel from the other side, declared he durst not trust himself to the seamanship of such fellows as managed her ; and turning his horse, went round by Gloucester.

Several melancholy accidents indeed within the course of a dozen years, have thrown discredit on these ferries. One we had from a gentleman, who himself providentially escaped being lost. He went to the beach just as the vessel was unmooring. His horse had been embarked before, together with sixty head of cattle. A passage with such company appeared so disagreeable, that he and about six or seven passengers whom he found on the beach, among whom was a young

young lady, agreed to get into an open boat and be towed over by the large one.

The passage was rough, and they observed the cattle on board the larger vessel rather troublesome. They were now about half way over, when an ox near the aperture in the side of the vessel, mentioned above for the entrance and egress of cattle, entangled his horn in a wooden slider which closes it, and which happened according to the careless custom of boatmen, to be unpinned. The beast finding his head fixed, and endeavouring to disengage himself, drew up the slider. The vessel heeled; the tide rushed in; and all was instant confusion. The danger and the impossibility of opposing it in such a crowd struck every one at once.

In the mean time the passengers in the open boat, who were equally conscious of the ruin, had nothing left but to cut the rope, which tied them to the sinking vessel. But not a knife could be found in the whole company. After much confusion, a little neat tortoise-shell pen-knife was produced; with which unequal instrument they just got the rope severed, when the large vessel and its whole contents went down: all on board perished,

perished, except two or three oxen which were seen floating on the surface ; and it was believed got to shore.

The joy of the passengers in the boat was however short-lived. It soon appeared they had escaped only one mode of death : they were left to themselves in a wide expanse of water ; at the mercy of a tide ebbing with a violent current to the sea ; without oars or sail ; and without one person on board who had ever handled either. A gentleman among them had just authority enough to keep them all quiet ; without which their safety could not have been insured a moment. He then took up a paddle, the only instrument on board, with an intention, if possible, to get the boat on shore ; but the young lady, who was his niece, throwing her arms round him in an agony of despair, not knowing what she did, would not let him proceed. He was obliged to quiet her by threatening in a furious tone to strike her down instantly with the oar, if she did not desist. Notwithstanding all his efforts they were hurried away by the ebbing waters as far as Kingroad ; where the violence of the tide slackening, he prevented the

the boat from going out to sea ; and got it by degrees to shore.

From the gentleman who told us this story, we had the account of the loss of an open boat in the same passage, through the obstinacy of a passenger.

The wind was rough, and a person on board lost his hat ; which floated away in a contrary direction. He begged the waterman to turn round to recover it ; but the waterman told him it was as much as their lives were worth to attempt it ; on which the passenger, who seemed to be a tradesman, started up, seized the helm, and swore the fellow should return. In the struggle the helm got a wrong twist, and the boat instantly filled and went to the bottom. It appeared afterwards that the hat was of value, for the owner had secreted several bills in the lining of it.

For ourselves, however, we found the passage only a disagreeable one ; and if there was any danger, we saw it not. The danger chiefly, I suppose, arises from carelessness and overloading the boat.

As our chaise could not be landed till the tide flowed up the beach, we were obliged to wait at the ferry-house. Our windows overlooked the channel, and the Welsh-coast, which, seen from a higher stand, became now, a woody and beautiful distance. The wind was brisk and the sun clear, except that at intervals it was intercepted by a few floating clouds. The playing lights, which arose from this circumstance on the opposite coast, were very picturesque. Pursuing each other, they sometimes just caught the tufted tops of trees ; then gleaming behind shadowy woods, they spread along the vales till they faded insensibly away.

Often these partial lights are more stationary ; when the clouds, which fling their lengthened shadows on distant grounds, hang some time balanced in the air. But whenever found, or from whatever source derived, the painter observes them with the greatest accuracy ; he marks their different appearances, and lays them up in his memory among the choice ingredients of distant landscape. Almost alone they are sufficient to vary distance.

A mul-

A *multiplicity of objects*, melted harmoniously together, contribute to *enrich* it: but without throwing in these *gleaming lights*, the artist can hardly avoid *heaviness*.\*

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\* When the shadows of floating clouds fall upon the sides of mountains, they have a bad effect.—See Picturesque Observat. on Scotch Landscape, vol. ii. p. 152.

## SECTION XII.

FROM the ferry-house to Bristol, the views are amusing. The first scene was a spacious lawn, about a mile in diameter, the area of which was flat; and the boundary a grand woody bank, adorned with towers and villas, standing either boldly near the top, or seated in woody recesses near the bottom. The horizon line is well varied, and broken.

The whole of this landscape is too large; and not characterised enough to make a picture; but the contrast between the plain and the wood, both of which are objects of equal grandeur, is pleasing; and many of the parts, taken separately, would form into good composition.

When we left the plain, the road carried us into shady lanes, winding round woody eminences; one of which was crowned with  
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an artificial castle. The castle indeed, which consisted of one tower, might have been better imagined: the effect however was good, though the object was paltry.

About three miles on this side of Bristol we had a grand view of rising country. It consisted of a pleasing mixture of wood and lawn: the parts were large; and the houses and villages scattered in good proportion. The whole, when we saw it, was overspread with a purplish tint, which as the objects were so near, we could not account for; but it united all the parts together in very pleasing harmony.

Nature's landscapes are generally harmonized. Whether the sky is enlightened, or whether it lowers; whether it is tinted, or whether it is untinted, it gives its yellow lustre, or its grey obscurity, to the surface of the earth. It is but seldom however, that we meet with those *strong harmonizing tints*, which the landscape before us presented.

As the air is the vehicle of these tints, distant objects will of course participate of them in the greatest degree; the foregrounds  
will

will be little affected, as they are seen only through a very thin veil of tinted air. But when the painter thinks it proper to introduce these strong tints into his distances, he will give his foregrounds likewise, in some degree, a participating hue; more perhaps than in reality belongs to them; or, at least he will work them up with such colours, mute or vivid, as accord best with the general tone of his landscape.—How far it is proper for him to attempt these uncommon appearances of nature, is not a decided question. If the landscape before us should be painted with that full purple glow, with which we saw it overspread, the connoisseur would probably take offence, and call it affected.

The approach to Bristol is grand; and the environs everywhere shew the neighbourhood of an opulent city; though the city itself lay concealed till we entered it. For a considerable way, the road led between stone-walls, which bounded the fields on each side. This boundary, though of all others the most unpleasing, is yet not an improper approach to  
a great

a great town ; it is a kind of connecting thread.

The narrowness of the port of Bristol, which is formed by the banks of the river, is very striking. It may be called a dry harbour, notwithstanding the river : for the vessels, when the tide ebbs, lie on an ouzy bed in a deep channel. The returning tide lifts them to the height of the wharfs. It exhibits of course none of those beautiful winding shores, which often adorn an estuary. The port of Bristol was probably first formed when vessels, afraid of being cut from their harbours by corsairs, ran up high into the country for security.

The great church is a remnant only of the ancient fabric. It has been a noble pile when the nave was complete, and the stunted tower crowned with a spire, as I suppose it once was. We were sorry we did not look into Ratcliff church, which is said to be an elegant piece of Gothic architecture.

The country around Bristol is beautiful, though we had not time to examine it. The scenery about the Hot-wells is in a great degree picturesque. The river is cooped between two high hills ; both of which are adorned

adorned with a rich profusion of rock, wood, and verdure. Here is no offskip indeed, but as far as *foregrounds* alone make a picture, (and they will do much better alone than *distances*,) we are presented with a very beautiful one.—Between these hills stands the pump-room, close to the river; and every ship, that sails into Bristol, sails under its windows.

The road between Bristol and Bath contains very little worth notice. We had been informed of some grand retrospect views, but we did not find them. We were told afterwards, there are two roads between Bath and Bristol; of which the Gloucestershire road is the more picturesque. If so, we unfortunately took the wrong one.

At Bath the buildings are splendid; but the picturesque eye finds little amusement among such objects. The circus, from a corner of one of the streets that run into it, is thrown into perspective: and if it be hap-

pily enlightened, is seen with advantage. The crescent is built in a simpler, and greater style of architecture.

I have heard an ingenious friend, Colonel Mitford, who is well versed in the theory of the picturesque, speak of a very beautiful and grand effect of light and shade, which he had sometimes observed from an afternoon sun, in a bright winter-day, on this structure. No such effect could happen in summer; as the sun, in the same meridian, would be then too high. A grand mass of light, falling on one side of the Crescent, melted imperceptibly into as grand a body of shade on the other; and the effect rose from the *opposition* and *graduation* of these extremes. It was still increased by the pillars, and other members of architecture, which beautifully varied, and broke both the light and the shade, and gave a richness to each. The whole seemed like an effort of nature to set off art; and the eye roved about in astonishment to see a mere mass of regularity become the ground of so pleasing a display of harmony and picturesque effect. The elliptical form of the building was the magical source of this exhibition.

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As objects of curiosity, the parades, the baths, the rooms, and the abbey, are all worth seeing. The rising grounds about Bath, as they appear from the town, are a great ornament to *it*: though they have nothing pleasing in *themselves*. There is no variety in the out-line; no breaks, no masses of woody scenery.

From Bath to Chippenham, the road is pleasant; but I know not, that it deserves any higher epithet.

From Chippenham to Marlborough, we passed over a wild plain, which conveys no idea but that of vastness, unadorned with beauty.

Nature, in scenes like these, seems only to have chalked out her designs. The ground is laid in, but left unfinished. The ornamental part is wanting--the river, or the lake winding through the bottom, which lies in form to receive it; the hanging rocks, to adorn some shooting promontory; and the

woody screens to encompass, and give richness to the whole.

Marlborough-down, is one of those vast dreary scenes, which our ancestors, in the dignity of a state of nature, chose as a repository of their dead. Everywhere we see the tumuli, which were raised over their ashes ; among which the largest is Silbury-hill. These structures have no date in the history of time ; and will be, in all probability, among its most lasting monuments. Our ancestors had no ingenious arts to gratify their ambition ; and as they could not aim at immortality by a bust, a statue, or a piece of bas-relief, they endeavoured to obtain it by works of enormous labour. It was thus in other barbarous countries. Before the introduction of arts in Egypt, kings endeavoured to immortalize themselves by lying under pyramids.

As we passed, what are called, the ruins of Abury, we could not but admire the industry  
and

and sagacity of those antiquarians, who can trace a regular plan in such a mass of apparent confusion\*.

At the great inn at Marlborough, formerly a mansion of the Somerset-family, one of these tumuli stands in the garden, and is whimsically cut into a spiral walk ; which, ascending imperceptibly, is lengthened into half a mile. The conceit at least gives an idea of the bulk of these massy fabrics.

From Marlborough the road takes a more agreeable appearance. Savernake-forest, through which it passes, is a pleasant woody scene : and great part of the way afterwards is adorned with little groves, and opening glades, which form a variety of second distances on the right. But we seldom found a foreground to set them off to advantage.

\* See an account of Abury, by Dr. Stukely.

The

The country soon degenerates into open corn-lands: but near Hungerford, which is not an unpleasant town, it recovers a little spirit; and the road passes through close lanes, with breaks here and there, into the country, between the boles of trees.

As we approach Newberry, we had a view of Donnington-castle; one of those scenes where the unfortunate Charles reaped some glory. Nothing now remains of this gallant fortress, but a gate-way and two towers. The hill, on which it stands, is so overgrown with brush-wood, that we could scarcely discern any vestiges either of the walls of the castle, or of the works which had been thrown up against it.

This whole woody hill, and the ruins upon it, are now tenanted, as we were informed by our guide, only by ghosts; which however add much to the dignity of these forsaken habitations, and are, for that reason, of great use in description.

In Virgil's days, when the Tarpeian rock was graced by the grandeur of the capital, it  
was

was sufficiently ennobled. But in its early state, when it was *sylvestribus horrida dumis*, it wanted something to give it splendor. The poet therefore, has judiciously added a few ideas of the awful kind; and has contrived by this machinery to impress it with more dignity in its rude state, than it possessed in its adorned one :

Jam tum religio pavidos terrebat agrestes  
 Dira loci ; jam tum sylvam, saxumque timebant.  
 “ Hoc nemus, hunc, inquit, frondoso vertice collem,  
 “ (Quis Deus, incertum est) habitat Deus. Arcades ipsum  
 “ Credunt se vidisse Jovem, cum sæpe nigrantem  
 “ Ægida concuteret dextrâ, nimbosque cieret.”

Of these imaginary beings the painter, in the meantime, makes little use. The introduction of them, instead of raising, would depreciate his subject. The characters indeed of Jupiter, Juno, and all that progeny, are rendered as familiar to us, through the antique, as those of Alexander and Cæsar. But the judicious artist will be cautious how he goes farther. The *poet* will introduce a phantom of any kind without scruple. He knows his advantage. He speaks to the *imagination*; and if he deals only in *general ideas*, as all good poets

poets on such subjects will do, every reader will form the phantom according to his *own* conception. But the *painter*, who speaks to the *eye*, has a more difficult work. He cannot deal in *general* terms : he is *obliged to particularize*: and it is not likely, that the spectator will have the same idea of a phantom which he has. ---The painter therefore acts prudently in abstaining, as much as possible, from the representation of fictitious beings.

The country about Newberry furnished little amusement. But if it is not *picturesque*, it is very *historical*.

In every *historical country* there are a set of ideas which peculiarly belong to it. *Hastings*, and *Tewksbury*; *Runnemede*, and *Clarendon*, have all their associate ideas. The ruins of abbeys and castles have another set: and it is a soothing amusement in travelling, to *assimilate* the mind to the *ideas of the country*. The ground we now trod, has many historical ideas associated with it; two great battles, a long siege, and the death of the gallant Lord Falkland.

The

The road from Newberry to Reading, leads through lanes, from which a flat and woody country is exhibited on the right, and rising grounds on the left. Some unpleasant common fields intervene.

In the new road from Reading to Henley, the high grounds overlook a very picturesque distance on the right. The country indeed is flat; but this is a circumstance we do not dislike in a distance, when it contains a variety of wood and plain; and when the parts are large, and well-combined.

Henley lies pleasantly among woody hills: but the chalk, bursting everywhere from the soil, strikes the eye in spots; and injures the landscape.

Hence we struck again into the road across Hounslow-heath; having crowded much more

within the space of a fortnight (to which our time was limited) than we ought to have done.

THE END.

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